The CALENDAR

A Quarterly Review

VOLUME IV

April 1927 — July 1927

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THE FESTIVALS OF FLIGHT

TOO sensitively nerved to bear
Domestication, O my friends
On a perpetual change of air
Our sole stability depends.

By what phenomenal emotion,
Alas, is each of us obsessed
That travel, flight, and ceaseless motion
Must keep us in a state of rest?

Schooled by the new gymnastic Muse
In barbarous academies,
The rifle and the running noose
Conferred upon us their degrees,

To play our more precarious parts
Trapezed above the rolling decks
Or in the high equestrian arts
To graduate with broken necks.

Yet I could wish, before I perish,
To make my peace with god above
Or, like a millionaire, to cherish
My purse with soft marsupial love,

Or like a poet woo the moon
Riding an arm-chair for my steed
And with a flashing pen harpoon
Terrific metaphors of speed—

Speed, motion, flight!—the last hosanna
Of routed angels: sword that fights
The coward free: unfailing manna
Of earth's fastidious Israelites!

Valise of invalids on tour:
Refuge of refugees in flight:
Home of the homeless: sinecure
Of sinners at the dead of Night!

Fetish of the record-breakers,
Heaven in which our senses swim,
Aviary of aviators
Whose poultry are the seraphim!

Cook's agent to the Unexplored,
Faker-up of bogus charts:
Perambulator of the bored,
And ambulance of broken hearts!

Deranger of the intellects
Of those who flee before a curse,
Fixative of blurred effects,
And laxative of minor verse!

Mecca of all mechanic progress:
Destination course and goal
Of those who haven't any: Ogress
Applying clysters to the Soul:

Tourist, who leaves with ten-league boots
His spoor of Castles down the Rhine:
Smoker of immense cheroots—
The funnels of the Cunard Line!

Of cranks, the boomerang and waddy :
Of rogues, the assegai and kerry :
Black Maria to the Body,
To the Soul a Stygian ferry !

Pope of the gypsies : sole religion
Of those who sail with every breeze :
The Son, the Father, and the Pigeon
Of wandering aborigines !

To Thee our heathen hymns are hurled
From where we wander in the clouds—
Sonatas on the fog-horn skirled,
The pibroch of the creaking shrouds.

Lead, kindly ignis fatuus, far
Amid the world's encircling gloom :
In my last trek be thou the star
To whom I hitch my disselboom.

Far from the famed memorial arch
Towards a lonely grave I come,
My heart in its funereal march
Goes beating like a muffled drum,

Yet lest when midnight winds are loud,
I should not see the way to go,
Let every gross proverbial cloud
Its shabby silver lining show :

And you shall lend me if you please
That in the mode I may appear
Your shirt, tormented Hercules !
Laocoon ! your bandolier.

ROY CAMPBELL.

TWO RUSSIAN STORIES

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

The following two stories, one by pre-revolution REMIZOV and the other by post-revolution BABEL, have not been placed together with any intention to suggest comparison or contrast of the two writers' magnitude or humanity; but because, in what is, biologically, the most important aspect of art (that extremely influential form of human activity, and hence government) these two stories, otherwise so disparate, are of a piece, being what I would call active, or, perhaps more definitely, vitalized. The movement in them is uninterrupted and uninterruptable. The work, that is, lands you at another point than that from which you started.

In this the two stories differ essentially from the bulk of Russian stories and novels familiar to English readers, which end, if the striving towards vitality has been great, either in a broken fluttering of defeated wings, or, else, in an essentially inactive (devitalized or even unvitalized) return to the starting point. Some would call them dynamic, as opposed to static. Of the first kind of the static (those in which the vitality has been great), I would cite as examples such giants as Gogol, with that wonderful villain of his, Tchitchikov, failing; and Dostoevsky, with his ridiculous *Raskolnikov penitent* as curtain, and his Karamazov book unfinished. Of the second kind, in whom there is no vitality, what better example could be found than that great nebulosity Tchekhov, with his Uncle Vanyas, his neurotically discontented professors, and his complacently moralizing sinners?

Yet I must insist that I refer to nothing but movement in the *story*; of course, no comparison between, say, blood and thunder Babel and biblical Dostoevsky can possibly be suggested. There may be some who regard the movement of story as the principal ingredient; and would even drag the subject and ideas into this; and thus look back on the familiar great writers of the Russian nineteenth century with horror; but that is another matter.

Remizov's "Burning" may be taken to describe the destruction of Sodom; through the medium of a Russian timber-built town in the wheat-growing provinces; that is, with true *couleur locale*—which is the writer's own; in which the work of mediaeval artists is exemplary. In place of an annoying attempt to reconstruct the absolutely alien trappings of ancient Sodom, we have a Russian town, and the uneasy gossip of simple superstitious Russians who (before the Revolution) scent, in prosperity, coming catastrophe. For the hollow observances of religion he uses the blind trust in icons' power; he does not attempt to shock or intrigue by describing or suggesting peculiar vices, but refers simply to ordinary brothels, and so on. I think that, as one is not dazzled by the stagey properties of reconstructed antiquity, the impression of divine vengeance is much greater.

Babel's "Letter", apart from the story it contains, is of additional interest because of the curious intermixture of revolutionary and newspaper jargon in the simple revolutionary soldier's speech. In this it is an extremely valuable political document, to be preferred to several volumes of inaccurate or false (documented!) newspaper reports on institutions and "movements".

I have translated, for the look of the thing, *Pol*(itetcheskoie)-*otdel*(enie) as *Pol*(itical)*dep*(artment); and *Izvestia Tsik* as the *CEC* (i.e., Central Executive Committee) *News*. I have tried to write Russian names, not by "scientific transliteration" (which has other uses), but by writing down in an English way what I hear. Thus that which our Professors, with no regard for the usage and commonsense of English, write "Budeny", I prefer to write as an English ear hears it, "Boudyonny".

Bibliographical Note

"The Burning" was first published in a collection of stories *The Devil's Lair* Eos, St. Petersburg, 1908; then, revised, in *Zga, Wizard Stories,* Plamya, Prague, 1925.

"The Letter" was first published in a Russian periodical in 1924 or 5, and republished in a collection *Stories,* Government Press, 1925.

Alec Brown.

THE BURNING

I

ONE autumn morning, White Fiokla who told fortunes and did charms gave birth to a black mouse with wings, and in the newly born by common consent was recognized the seed of Satan; and when Yermil, Fiokla's lame, deaf-mute son, had buried the abomination down by the midden he hung himself.

And in the night of Saint Catharine's Day, which night, from time immemorial, the girls bite twigs off the trees and go to bed with their twigs between their teeth, and he whom they dream of is their future, there was a blizzard, and in the blizzard a sudden clap of thunder, and the daughter of the oldest hand in the railway yards (dear little Alyonka, who was not quite right in her mind) was found at dawn in the town gardens brought to shame, and lying there dead with her twig between her teeth.

On Saint Nicholas' Day, three rainbow suns appeared in smoky-looking clouds round an angry frosty sun; which three suns lay heavy on the town; and people whispered and muttered in corners of these ill omens: "Fever coming, an epidemic, indeed, and what will come of us poor folk?" "Now then, don't you complain, under God's care we are, all as one in his sight". "I wasn't saying anything.. . ."

Misfortune was definitely though dully felt to be there; at the gates, waiting only for its appointed hour.

"The Chinese, thousands and millions of them, marching straight against Russia, and the Turks with them." "Heavens, what a force!" "And our people, of course, they'll make a mess of it." "We're done for, that's the truth of it."

And before going to bed people carefully made the sign of

the cross over every window and had a look behind the holy lamps.

"Now, Makarikha, I'll tell you something, Advotya she told me they called up the Evil One out of the table at the Podkhmoutov's that trades in wheat." "Oh-oh-oh, and you don't mean to say so." "On my cross, O Queen of Heaven, I swear it. You know Advotya's a close enough old woman, nor is Mrs. Podkhmoutov given to talking, and there it is, no doubt whatsomever but He came, all blue, with six legs!" "O Holy Virgin, succour us! Oh, what will come upon us! We're done for, that's the truth of it!"

And people had evil dreams.

One was of the Church of the Saviour, at Easter as if it was, and no altar and no ikons, and in the church as if was Yermil lame and mute, Fiokla's son as hung himself, going round kissing the Easter kiss. A sort of all puffy boy it was, in thorns as it were, a-kicking about on the floor.

"A little old soldier, one of the old believers", Simon the watchman down at the railway workshops told the tale in his toothless voice, "said to me," says the old man, "there's ruin coming on all of Russia, and in Moscow the King Bell's broken into tiny pieces and every piece has turned into a serpent and the serpents crawled under the Ivan the Great belltower and the belltower's rockety and when at last it falls down everybody's heart will fly into pieces and universary passing away will begin".

"What silly things won't people say, it's nonsense, it's rubbish, that's what it is. The very first thing of all is productive labour and everything else in the world is only built round that. Workers of the world. . . ."

"There's no feeling safe with you, there'll be no ceremony shown your sort, in a jiffy they'll have you under lock and key, you rebels!"

"And in general," the police-master's order read, "if the necessity shows itself, no stint of measures will be taken for the extinction of newly-appeared suns about which evil-intentioned persons are spreading rumours and disturbing the peaceful population".

But the rainbow suns did not disappear, not in the least, and showed there round the angry frosty sun, and life went on its way. Never before in those parts had there been such a harvest as that year. Day and night the mills were charged and ground out the prize grain, and at the railway junction there was a ceaseless coming and going of trucks loaded high with every sort of grain and flour. Trade was good and brisk, with a ready market.

On Christmas Eve they did White Fiokla in, and buried every trace of her, and everyone felt a stone drop from his neck. On Twelfth Day, the Christening of Christ, they washed in the icy water through holes made in the ice, and indoors every corner and every door was swept with the cross. And everything went on swimmingly. Spring came, early and warm. By Easter the gardens were green and the winter corn was up, firm and strong. And there were even people with a good word for dead White Fiokla, such as "The old woman might have been let live, 'twasn't worth the mortal sin."

And the building of new houses began; with magnificent consecration with holy water strong foundations were laid, and day by day, piling up, the wood walls grew higher against the hewn crosses that shadowed future roofs.

And when Easter was over, there was a great to-do about the fire at the Deanery, because out of the bathhouse, which was gutted, they dragged the charred corpse of the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Holy Ghost, while as for His Reverence himself, he couldn't take service for a long time, he was so burned all over. And people winked and smirked at each other; and some shook their heads, and were ill at ease. "The devil's stolen away the cross, the cross is Satan's now", said the watchman at the railway workshops in his toothless voice, and the old believer soldier backed him up: "The heedless Evil One has taken the Temple and Throne of the Lord," he cried, "and he pollutes the vessel of the Lord with his filth and expectorates into the Holy Cup, and people commune not with the Blood of Christ but with the spit of Satan, and partake not of the Body of Christ but of the filth of Satan." And those that listened to

him nodded, "We're done for, that's the truth of it," they said.

After a warm, flowered May the summer heat began. There was a drought and not a single shower watered the thirsty drying fields, the scorching meadows, the worm-swarming gardens.

II

On the day of St. John the Baptist, at scarlet noon, there clanged from the Minster tower a quick alarm—fire had broken out in the town. Whole streets, overcrowded streets of working-people, slums, were afire; it had caught on all sides; the little wooden houses and the crazily highpiled wooden dosshouses had caught like heaps of tinder.

In gigantic whorls of dust great flames leapt high and fell, and the dusty whorls drove and whirled about the town, as if some unseen hand span grey fire-shot wool in the redhot cloudless sky; and crowds of people, caught unawares, rushed at random, their tongues paralysed, and savagely yelled like beasts.

And when, at the regular hour, the afternoon factory siren shrieked, how strange the sound seemed through the shriek of the fire, this din pierced by short, sharp, lonely cries for mercy, for quarter, to save the children, to save the household things. . .

And people brought icons out of their houses, because they thought the icons would take their part and keep disaster away.

But all the time the flame, creeping on, hissing, made its way through into secret corners and darted upwards, and took in its embrace still more and more untouched houses. And the dusty whorls, bluish in the evening light, drove and whirled about the town, as if fiery blue gimlets bored the heavy air. A glow in the sky, torn on the wind, hung over the town, over the black chimneys that rose erect from the smoking charred remains.

Then the railway workshops and the petroleum stores were afire, and with a sort of savagery, as if pursued with a sort of horror, the hot engines rushed from their iron stables, shrieking with broken dry whistles on all the tracks, and beneath their hot wheels something sighed and hissed ominously and menacingly.

In a scattered way, now and again bursting into fountains, the burning elevators roared, and someone, amok, roared with

insane laughter and showered about him the ruddy amber grains of corn.

* * *

That beautiful night of St. John again a quick alarm beat from the Minster tower—in the narrow alleys the brothels and low pleasure haunts were afire. The fire had gone into them, a merciless visitor, jealously clasping the walls, its nervous tongue fondling the ceiling, and bodies naked, bodies as the fire found them, fell from the upper rooms on to the pavement, cut by glass and burned. The inflamed eyes of the stifled crowd grew great from the intoxicating heat, and lunatic croaky laughter mingled with prayers and cries.

A monk in dark cloth with immobile face like stone stood in the heat of the fire. He alone was dispassionate, and fearful in his quiet. The fire in the depths of his eyes pierced the fire. A thousand hands snatched at his skirts, a thousand hands crept to his feet; "Thou, our Saviour, preserve us! Thou, our Saviour, save us! Thou, our Saviour, have mercy on us!"

* * *

And a third time the fearful quick alarm rang out from the Minster tower, when, lazily wafting aside the clouds of blood and gold, the sun lit up the earth—from the two opposite ends of the town—fearful, thick—rolled smoke. The prison was afire, the hospital was afire, a feast day for the free avenging fire, breaking open that living grave, accursed prison!

The prisoners broke up the iron doors and with the iron bars they killed their warders; and, broken, mark for stray bullets, they crept about the town.

And in the stifling hospital wards in the yellowish-green light, among dancing orange suns, piercing groans rose up and the cackle of the insane streamed out.

And then the fire cast its burning nets past the hospital wall over on to the municipal slaughter-house, and the town trembled as at the flood—the penned-in beasts howling in a human despair.

And the fire, with heavy flaming iron, opened soundless

cemetery graves, and it seemed that the dead, rising up from their graves, grew into black columns of stinking smoke.

The monk in his dark cloth, with firmly closed lips, his hands crossed on his breast, stood among the crowds grown bestial and the beasts in their despair. About his head flew sparks like flocks of golden birds. The alarm now never ceased and people in tatters ran, burned, aimlessly in despair.

The Government *vodka* palaces were afire, and what hordes of famished men and women then rushed for the free *vodka,* and the fiery *vodka* ate at their hearts, and in blue unbearable flame the miserable wretches writhed. And the alarm now never ceased.

From horror many were insane. Mothers lost their babes. Children dragged huge household bundles along. No man dared stay under his roof, even if it were whole. The whole town left its home and went out on to the streets.

And search for the man who did it, and once they thought they were on the track, seeing some women in dark clothes slinking about round dark corners by houses. Then they tore the old man, old Simon the watchman, to pieces, because, without giving it a thought, he lit his pipe. And the old believer soldier lost an arm. And another was thrown into the fire. And others also suffered in vain.

And "Who is it? Where find him? Where is the man who did it?" they asked the monk. "Thou, our Saviour, preserve us! Thou, our Saviour, save us! Thou, our Saviour, have mercy on us!"

And on fences in black letters stood written: "To-morrow there shall be no fire!"

III

A close-mesh scarlet net smokily hung over the town. Behind the scarlet net swam a blood-coloured core of burning sun that spread infection and the stench of burning and the stink of putrefaction.

The third morning began—the third day and the last day. During the night the Minster church with all the holy relics had burned to the ground. The belltower had fallen, and the deep

voice of the alarm no more rang out and called no more, and nothing more was left to burn. The whole town was consumed.

Frenzied crowds wandered about and old scores, in madness, were settled with smouldering logs as weapons, and, drunken from horror, despair, and blood, towards night they left the town.

* * *

Out beyond the town, crushed together, pressed close one to the other, that last night those who had come out of it alive took shelter. And among them all stood the monk in dark cloth, but no one with his voice called on him or offered him prayer; only eyes, hundreds of eyes, were fixed on his heart, hid by the cassock he wore, with prayer for mercy.

And then, for the first time, that motionless stone face of the monk moved. He took the vessel from his breast and dipped the sprinkler into it, and sprinkled the pleading eyes. And in a second, like one dry field of tinder, the open country burst into flame. The flaming cloud tore heaven apart and severed the night, and burning fragments lay between heaven and earth.

* * *

Far reaching, over the consumed town, was utter darkness, and the stars alone looked on the earth—the monk in his dark rags.

He alone stood among the ashes of the accursed town that was burned, his own town, and his heart, in pain, burned more than all the fire and fiercer than all flame.

Alexey Remizov.

THE LETTER

HERE is a letter, dictated to me by Kourdiukov, a lad in our expedition. It should not be forgotten. I have copied it without touching it up, and give it here word for word, just as it was.

"Dear Mother, Eudokia Fiodorovna. In the first lines of this letter I make haste to tell you that thanks to the Lord I find myself alive and well which same I hope to hear from you. (Here follows a list of relations and so on, which I leave out; let us go on to the second part).

"Dear Mother, Eudokia Fiodorovna. I make haste to write to you that I am in comrade Boudyonny's Red Horse, and also your *koum* Nikon Vassilitch is in it who at the present moment happens to be a red hero. He took me to himself into the expedition of the Poldep where we transport newspapers and literature to the lines the *Moscow CEC News* the *Moscow Pravda* and our own paper that knows no quarter the *Red Cavalryman* which every warrior of the front line desires to consume and whereupon with heroic spirit he cuts down the swine the gentry here in Poland, I'm getting on fine here with Nikon Vassilitch.

"Dear Mother, Eudokia Fiodorovna. Send me what you can whichever it is in your power to manage. Please kill the speckled boar and make me a parcel addressed to the Poldep of comrade Boudyonny for Vassily Kourdiukov. Every night I lay down when I go to bed on an empty stomach and without any blankets which is mighty cold. Write to me about my Stepa whether he is alive or not please look after him and write to me about him whether he has still got the hitch and also as regards the scabs in his front feet is he shoed or not. Please, dear Mother Eudokia Fiodorovna, dont forget to wash his front feet with the soap which I have left behind the icons but if Father used it all up buy some more in Krasodar and the Lord will not desert you. I am also able to tell you that this country is quite poor the peasants with their horses hide from our heroic lads in the woods there is not much corn to see and it is fearfully small we laugh at it.

The farmers sow rye and likewise with oats. Here hops grow on poles so that it comes out all very regular and make illegal spirits with it.

"And now I write you a few more lines to describe to you at once about Father as he killed my brother Fiodor Timofeitch a year agone. Our red brigade of comrade Apanasenko was advancing upon the town of Rostov when in our ranks an act of treachery took place. And Father at that time was with Denikin he was like commander of a company which people what saw them said they wore medals like in the old regime. In regard to which after that act of treachery we were taken prisoners and Father saw brother Fiodor Timofeitch and Father he began cutting Fiodia about and saying you hide you red dog you son of a bitch and that sort of talk and cut him about till dark until brother Fiodor Timofeitch was dead. I wrote a letter to you then about how your Fiodia was lying there dead without his cross. But Father nabbed me with the letter and said you mother's whelps you f . . . ing spawn that tart's I bellied your mother and I'll belly her again I'm a lost man I'll bring my seed on the way it should go and suchlike more. I was given sufferings by them like our Saviour Jesus Christ only in haste I ran away from Father and got to my unit that of comrade Apanasenko. And our brigade got orders to go to the town of Voronezh to reinforce the ranks and we received reinforcements there and also horses haversacks revolvers and everything we ought to have. As for Voronezh I can tell you dear Mother Eudokia Fiodorovna that it's a fine little town and will be a bit bigger than Krasnodar the people in it are very handsome the river is capable for bathing. We were given two pounds of bread a day half a pound of meat and sugar as was necessary so that when we got up we drank sweet tea and in the evening did the same and forgot being hungry and for dinner I used to go to brother Simyon Timofeitch for pancakes or roast duck and thereupon went to bed. At that time on account of his desperate heroism on the field of battle the whole regiment wanted Simyon Timofeitch for commander and an order came from comrade Boudyonny and he got two horses proper clothes a cart

for his things separately and the order of the Red Standard, and I was recognized as his brother. Now if any neighbour begins to come it anyhow with you Simyon Timofeitch can do him in whenever you like. Then we begin to chase General Denikin and killed thousands of them and drove them into the Black Sea but only Father was not anywhere to be seen and Simyon Timofeitch looked for him in all the lines because he was very much grieved for brother Fiodia. But only dear Mother as you know as to Father and his obstinate character so what did he do insolently died his beard from ginger to black and was present in the town of Maikop in civvies so no one of the population knew he was as large as life once a policeman under the old regime. But only justice will out and your *koum* Nikon Vassilitch happened to see him and wrote a letter to Simyon Timofeitch. We sprang into our saddles and galloped two hundreds *versts* myself brother Simyon and the lads at the post who wanted.

"And what did we see in the town of Maikop? We saw that the population of the rear was absolutely out of sympathy with the front ranks of the revolution and in it everywhere treacherous acts and it was as full of Jews as in the old regime. And Simyon Timofeitch had a deal of wrangling in the town of Maikop with the Jews who would not give Father up but put him in prison under lock and key and said an order has come from comrade Trotsky not to murder prisoners we ourselves will judge him keep calm he'll get what he deserves. But all the same Simyon Timofeitch had his way why he is commander of a regiment and had all the orders of the Red Standard from comrade Boudyonny and threatened to kill everyone who disputed about Father's person and did not hand him over and the boys threatened too. But as soon as Simyon Timofeitch got Father he began flogging him and drew up all the heroic lads in the courtyard as it ought to be in military fashion and then splashed some water on Father Timofey Rodionitch's beard and the colour ran off his beard, and asked Timofey Rodionitch, did Senka, d'you feel all right in my hands? No, said Father, bad. Then Senka asked and did Fiodia feel all right in your hands when you did him in? No, said Father, Fiodia felt bad. Then Senka asked,

did you think, Father then you'd get it? No, said Father, I didn't think I'd get it. Then Senka turned to the crowd and said and I think that if I get into the hands of your lot I sha'n't get any mercy and now Father we're going to finish you off.

"And Timofey Rodionitch began insolently cursing Senka f . . . ing his mother and the Virgin and hit Senka in the chaps and Simyon Timofeitch sent me out of the yard so that dear Mother Eudokia Fiodorovna I cannot describe to you as to how they finished off Father because I was sent out of the yard. And after that we were stationed in the town of Novorossisk as for this town I can tell you that the other side of it there isn't any dry land at all only water the Black Sea and we stayed there till May when we went to the Polish front and now we're cutting up the Polish gentry like anything. . . . I remain your loving son Vassily Timofeitch Kourdiukov Mother keep your eye on my little Stepa and the Lord will not leave you".

That is Kourdiukov's letter, not changed in one word. When I had finished it he took the sheet out and hid it in his armpit against his skin.

"Kourdiukov," I asked the boy, "was your father a bad 'un?"

"The devil," he said, sullenly.

"Your mother better?"

"Mother's not so bad. Here is our family if you'd like to see it. . . ."

He stretched out to me a cracked photograph. On it was Timofey Kourdiukov, a broad-shouldered policeman in uniform with his beard well combed-out, motionless, with high cheek-bones and a bright look in his colourless and stupid eyes. Next to him, in a bamboo armchair, was a tiny peasant woman in a full loose blouse, with faded, bright, and timid features. And against a wall, against that pitiful sort of provincial photographer's background with flowers and pigeons, two youths lounged—freakishly huge, stupid, broadfaced, bulgy-eyed, frozen as if at lessons—the two Kourdiukov brothers, Fiodor and Simyon.

I. Babel.

THE OLD ORCHARD

NOW shut your eyes
all you who hate apples!
Last red light dapples
wild skies.

Hie! Hie! fruit topples
down, apples lie
rolling below
the nightfall. I

want apples
from the tree
of life, and to know
more.

Revive me with apples
to forget;
and make me know
afresh.

Pallid, poor thing! yet I
revive with apples.
Shake the bough
harder yet!

Long ago, once before
we tasted
and wasted;
now let's eat up the core.

Let us know in full!
Pull
down apples!
—Hark! how they thresh

the floor!
Eat, woman, eat more
the crisp flesh!
Yes! be rash!

Eat it all! Oh
the whole apple!
Last time we were both
too nesh.

Eat, and lie down!
Between your thighs
disclose
the soft gulf. Be wise!

Lift up your heads
O ye gates! Even lift them up
ye everlasting doors!
That the king of glory may come in.

Who is this king of glory?
Lift up your heads O ye gates!
He treads
without feet the red floors.

Lie down beneath the tree!
If God looks, let him see
we are even as he
busy.

He is wise, is he?
At last, so are we.
Let us know, you and me,
one another.

Let us in full know
one another;
and be known just so!
For the rest, don't bother!

D. H. Lawrence.

RAINBOW

ONE thing that is bow-legged
and can't put its feet together
is the rainbow.

Even if the Lord God shouted
—Attention!—
it couldn't put its feet together.

Yet it's got two feet
as you know,
and two pots of gold
we are told.

What I see
when I look at the rainbow
is one foot in the lap of a woman
and one in the loins of a man.

The feet of the arch
that the Lord God rested the worlds on.

And wide, wide apart,
with nothing but desire between them.

The two feet of the rainbow
want to put themselves together.
But they can't, or there'd be the vicious circle.

So they leap up like a fountain.
He leaps up, she leaps up,
like rockets!
and they curve over.

From the heart a red ray,
from the brow a gold,
from the hips a violet
leaps.

Dark blue the whole desire leaps
brindled with rays
all of the colours
that leap

and lean over
in the arch
of the rainbow.

They will always do it.
The Lord God said so.

If there are pots of gold
they are pails
of the honey of experience
hanging from the shoulders of the rainbow.

But the one thing that is bow-legged
and can't put its feet together
is the rainbow.

Because one foot is the heart of a man
and the other is the heart of a woman.
And these two, as you know,
never meet.

Save they leap
high—
Oh hearts, leap high!
—they touch in mid-heaven like an acrobat
and make a rainbow.

D. H. Lawrence.

THE ANTHOLOGIST IN OUR MIDST

THE Golden Treasury of 1861 is one of the first popular anthologies in the modern sense. It settled the whole troublesome question of "Beauties of the Poets" and their extraction by only claiming to be a "lyrical" anthology. The editor of this "modern classic" was Francis Palgrave, working with two unnamed assistants; but he was guided in his selection either directly or indirectly by the judgment of Tennyson. Indeed, it was as much the influence of Tennyson through *The Golden Treasury* as the direct influence of his poems that gave the next two generations a Tennysonian view of the progress of English poetry. *The Golden Treasury*, with its later additions, has become the Dean of Anthologies, its original liberalism ossified beyond sympathy. Its one serious rival in circulation, Prof. Sir A. Quiller-Couch's *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (1900), admits its obligations; the compiler "cannot and does not wish to erase the dye his mind took from *The Golden Treasury*. ("Dye" is appropriate, suggesting how the poets have lost colour under Palgrave's handling). *The Treasury* is essentially a private anthology, very conscientiously performed, but all the more dangerous for that, for Palgrave was in private life not only an unsuccessful poet but a successful educationalist, and the first because of the second; therefore, still more liable to perpetuate personal taste (his own, guided by Tennyson's) as a false critical canon for public acceptance.

Palgrave, in the poetical style that marks the preface of practically every anthology—for the anthologist, after months of laborious reading the works of others, likes to give his own pen a good airing, and this is his only chance—boasts :—

> "Chalmer's vast collection with the whole works of all accessible poets not contained in it and the best anthologies of different periods have been twice (?) systematically read through : and it is hence improbable that any omissions which may be regretted are due to oversight."

Recent anthologists compiling "trade collections" have profited so much by Palgrave's industry that they seldom do more than use the same list of authors and find alternative poems of the same character as those that Palgrave (or Tennyson) selected.

The copying of anthologist from anthologist always suggests sheep at a gap. Dr. Robert Bridges, after the compilation of one trade anthology, *The Spirit of Man,* an act of genuine if misapplied creation, was persuaded to make another, *The Chilswell Book of English Verse,* which, though it altered the proportionate weight given to the elder poets and included a few rather backward moderns, was only a Golden-Treasury-Oxford-Book-of-English-Verse in disguise. One particular poem, John Clare's "I am but what I am who cares or knows," is the only Clare poem in *The Oxford Book of English Verse,* and the only one that Dr. Bridges printed; one might pass this as a case of great critics thinking alike, if it were not that Clare is far from being a one-poem man, and that Doctor Bridges evidently did not consult Edmund Blunden's recent and authoritative collection of Clare's poetry in which the proper text of the poem is restored. *The Oxford Book of English Verse* version was one re-written by the asylum doctor who had charge of Clare's affairs at the time he wrote it. Dr. Bridges, to speak bluntly, borrowed it and borrowed it carelessly.

Against *The Chilswell Book of English Verse* may be set Miss Naomi Royde-Smith's *A Private Anthology,* published about the same time. Miss Royde-Smith, in her fear of producing something remotely suggesting *The Golden Treasury* or its step-child, reacts so violently from the obvious that her collection seems to be competing for a prize as "The Most Individual Anthology". For instance, she includes nothing of Blake but his "Address to Tirzah", and nothing of Siegfried Sassoon's but a very slight poem written in 1910, years before he began any serious work. Eleanor Brougham in her *Corne from Olde Fieldes* does not become quite so idiosyncratic as Miss Royde-Smith. For, although much of her choice is fugitive verse proper to be included in an anthology, particularly the early English carols in manuscript in the Balliol College Library; yet she finds it necessary to pre-

serve from oblivion pieces so well known as Herbert's "Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright"; Sidney's "With how sad steps, o Moon"; Drayton's "Since there's no hope, come let us kiss and part"; and Shirley's "Glories of our Blood and State". Rochester is represented by a poem really by Quarles, and Skelton only by the usual commonplaces from "The Garland of Laurell". And now Mr. T. Earle Welby publishes his *Silver Treasury of English Lyrics,* in America, where *The Golden Treasury* is as much law to anthologists as in England: a case of international bi-metallism in which America provides the humbler coinage. He admits Palgrave's as the classic anthology, and does not try to compete but to supplement. His two tests are "Is this poem in its own sort of rare excellence?" "Is it in Palgrave?" But, in avoiding the Scylla of Palgrave, he sails dangerously near the Charybdis of Quiller-Couch. It would have been impracticable to admit both as classics, for the average reader cannot do with more than two standard anthologies to give a hand to each.

In outward appearance, a gradual change has come over the popular anthology in the last few years, but it is only the same change that has transformed journalism. Instead of weightiness, we tend to get lively sophistication; instead of gentlemanliness, a bland vulgarity; instead of confirmation of established taste, new discoveries not much believed in by the discoverer; instead of pretended moral uplift, pretended cultural uplift; instead of pompous flowery language—no, that remains in the prefaces as pompous and flowery as ever. The books are handier to the pocket, and "prettier" though more perishable in format. But as with the brisking up of daily journalism, so with the anthologies: they have improved themselves with regard to everything but the one thing necessary, Poetry, as the newspapers with regard to everything but Truth.

To discuss the ideal popular anthology: it must first have a popular anthologist. But what sort of anthologist would a popular referendum produce? Probably either a well-known poet or a well-known critic. But an anthology compiled by a well-known poet would almost certainly be based not on a critical decision as to what consti-

tutes a "popular" poem, but on idiosyncratic literary tastes. Even if he suppressed his tastes, it is not likely that he would be a good judge of what was popular, no matter how popular he was himself; for it is not the reading public that makes a poet popular but a small, influential reading class. Even if such a poet did succeed in making a good popular anthology as opposed to a poet's anthology, he would certainly go wrong in the selection of his own poems, either out of vulgar display or out of equally vulgar reticence. Indeed, it is inconceivable that a poet should be able to make a "popular" selection of his own poems without confessing to charlatanism.

As for the popular literary critic, he is a good mixer of literature, finding himself at home anywhere, whether in modernist poetry or among the pre-Raphaelites or among the seventeenth-century mystics. He would be a better popular anthologist than the poet, but, on the other hand, a less reliable one: by the time a literary critic has become the plain reader's guide, philosopher, and friend in literature, he has lost the power of serious application, all his energies having been consumed by the task of finding literary "copy". Any solid piece of literary work, such as actually reading hundreds of books carefully through in search of ideal anthology poems, would be quite beyond his powers. There are more instances of wanton carelessness in the literary critic's anthology than in any other kind. Besides this, he would be further handicapped by his journalistic habit of knowledge-and-taste display.

Suppose, however, that the difficult task of choosing an ideal and representative anthologist is successfully accomplished; how is he to be expected to act? First, he must be bound by no commercial restraint; he must not feel bound to print poems by a publisher's poet if he is convinced that the public has been forced to accept him, as they accept many useless patent medicines, merely by the hypnotism of good advertising. Next, he must have a definite critical programme. For the only possible excuse for an anthology of this ideal sort is an implied criticism, one that explains to the public what are the factors common to the poems that it naturally likes best; which is not the same as

the poems that it buys at the bookseller's for various reasons which have nothing to do with a liking for poetry itself. The reading of poetry as a social snobbery by the half-educated, or the pretence of reading it, is one of the greatest difficulties in the situation. It is impossible to decide exactly what is the actual poetry-reading public; whether the demands of the ninety-and-nine for poetry books of a certain kind are really serious; or whether the real reading public is the hundredth, since he really does buy poetry because he likes it and not because he wants to give it away as a Christmas present, or because he wishes to pass an examination in English literature, or because he wishes to impress his friends, or, if he is a clergyman, his congregation, with his literary attainments.

Our ideal anthologist, then, when he defines his critical attitude in a preface, must decide what the particular public for which he writes really expects from this anthology. Does it want to know the sort of poems that were written at different periods or are being written to-day? Does it want a nodding acquaintance with all the poets, with or without a desire to enlarge that acquaintance? Or a handy reference collection of best poems as well as the nodding acquaintance? Does it want poems that have become stock-anthology pieces because they have been labelled "The Best", or will it prefer a less conventional collection, even agreeing that it is a collection of not-quite-the-real-best? Or has it no ideas of best and worst in any improving sense, only requiring that the anthology shall be smooth and decorative? And after this, what does it want the poetry for? For every day or for holidays? Does it go to poetry as it goes to religion; or as it goes to sport?

His decision on all this, because it is an insoluble mystery what the public's interest in poetry really is, is bound to be a decision to compromise and to adopt the universally acceptable lie: "As everybody knows what really good poetry is at first sight, there is no need to define it and no problem to be faced about what to include. Good poems, the poems that everyone likes and understands, never get stale, never clash with each other, and are always immediately recognized." He is a priest of

poetry to the people ready to give them any god they like. The ideal anthologist, therefore, has revealed an important quality in himself; the suppression of any personal preferences. Ideally then, he must actually dislike poetry, but must be intuitive of the sort of poems that other people will like from year to year: in other words, his definite critical attitude will be a barometer of fashion; and, if to-day he compiles an authoritative anthology of ancient or contemporary or mixed verse, to-morrow he will have to recast it. He will have to be an astute student of literary booms. He will have to know, for instance, the exact upward popularity-curve of Donne, Marvell, Skelton, Blake, Clare, and others, and the exact downward curve of Burns, Byron, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, as revealed by an exhaustive historical chart of previous booms and depressions in poets.

Our anthologist will not, of course, find it necessary to omit living poets who ask for fees on the excuse that "the only touchstone of true poetry is time, and we cannot venture to set living poets side by side with the immortals for fear of the adverse verdict of posterity": this, as a matter of fact, only means that the publisher will not pay copyright fees *and* the anthologist's fees, so that the anthologist has to choose between including living poets and being paid himself. But, though the ideal anthologist will respect the living poet's demands for fees, he will take every possible step to prevent the poet from knowing beforehand in what company he is to find his poems; and will take care to send him no proofs. In this respect, all popular anthologists are ideal; we have never yet heard of an anthology whose editor has sent round his proposed introduction and a full list of the poems he intends to include. This would be a tenderness on the poet's behalf that no anthologist with any respect for himself or his public would permit. If the proudest poet were to complain that being put into a popular anthology is like being taken blindfold into a crowded room and then having the bandage removed when the doors are locked behind him, the meanest anthologist would laugh in his face. If the poet went on to suggest that the dead poets had their rights and should not be put in company of which they disapproved, the anthologist would get angry

and think that the poet was joking. Poetry, he would say, isn't like money or a business or landed property. The poet's testamentary wishes communicated to his friends or family have no force as soon as the short copyright period is over. His poetry is public property because, of course, the poet always writes as a public duty and speaks to the universal heart of his beloved fellow-man.

When dealing with the work of living poets, our ideal anthologist may well study Mr. Louis Untermeyer, the chief modern American anthologist, who, as a retired business-man, of the jewellery trade, is much more astute than his opposite number in England, Mr. Squire, an over-worked literary critic. Mr. Squire makes no concessions to modernist poetry; Mr. Untermeyer (if pressure from advanced critics is applied to him) manages to find at least one accidentally easy piece by even the most startling innovators. Mr. Untermeyer's political tactics in his *Modern American Poetry* have been condemned by superior literary critics; but Mr. Untermeyer is really doing his best to be an ideal anthologist, at great loss, probably, of self-respect. With each new edition, the emphasis of his choice shifts; in the latest, for instance, he has at last consented to admit the popular importance of T. S. Eliot and E. E. Cummings. It is doubtful whether the superior critic, if he set about making an anthology, would show a better spirit of self-sacrifice than Mr. Untermeyer. As he would be bound not to make way before success, he would have to compose his anthology of born failures. But even Mr. Untermeyer is not ideal, in spite of his readiness to please every one. For we cannot regard his criticism, which is in the main a register of his opinions of others, as entirely free from personal eccentricities. For instance, he might get few people to agree that Mr. Louis Untermeyer, the poet, should be allotted nearly fifteen pages of the book, which puts him into the same rank with notables like Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, Carl Sandburg, and Edwin Arlington Robinson. Nor might everyone agree that Jean Starr Untermeyer should be given the same poem-space as Emily Dickinson, even though this is only half Mr. Untermeyer's ration.

Perhaps the ideal anthologist would avoid all detailed prose-criticism like Mr. Untermeyer's where a simple act of taste (on the public behalf) would do: it would save a good deal of re-writing in the next edition if, say, E. E. Cummings' stock were to go up and Edwin Arlington Robinson's to fall again. Among other qualities in an anthologist thus ideally capricious should be a great assiduity in reading through anthology after anthology in search of an intrinsically popular poem by some difficult writer newly coming into fashion: he should be prepared, in spite of his dislike of poetry, to read even the collected works of the poet himself. He should be able to recognize a valuable old poem obscured by a dingy setting with all the acumen of a furniture dealer, and know how to present it properly. He should not be afraid to lop, combine, revise, retitle, respell, and repunctuate; and, if there are two versions of a poem, should give the most poetical and suppress the most poetic. Random examples of such popularizing methods are already so nume ous that he would not be wanting in encouragement.

Barnes' "Woak Hill", for instance, has been so frequently anthologized in seven stanzas that few of the general public are aware that it has three other stanzas at the end which the poet thought necessary to the poem but which are always omitted. The first verse of Lamb's "The Old Familiar Faces" is very seldom given, and a surgical operation that *The Oxford Book of English Verse* performs on Donne's "Ecstasy" courageously cuts away the too poetic latter half. A fine bold example of unauthorized revision will be found in Mr. J. C. Squires' *Selections from Modern Poets,* where no less than five separate lyrics by Frank Prewett have been run together as a single poem. For another example of unauthorized revision, we recall Coleridge's "Christabel" as it appears, truncated of course, in an anthology whose editor and publisher escapes our memory, since we "did it" at school:

> Sir Leoline the baron rich
> Hath a toothless mastiff *which* . . . .

Retitling is common. We find Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch retitling Wyatt's poem, which appears in Tottel as "The Lover

Showeth how he is Forsaken of Such as he sometime Enjoyed", as *"Vixi Puellis nuper Idoneus"*. This daring reference to Horace successfully keys down the passion of the poem, too strong for an ideal anthology, to the common-places of which Horace is the Poet Laureate. And the poem as it appears under this title also gives an instance of how an anthologist prefers the most poetical to the most poetic version of a poem. *The Oxford Book* rejects the following as the last stanza:

"It was no dream; for I lay broad awaking:
But all is turned thorough my gentleness,
Into a strangë fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of her goodnéss
And she also to use new fangleness.
But since that I so kindly am servéd
I would fain know what she hath déservéd."

in favour of

"It was no dream; for I lay broad awaking:
But all is *turn'd now, through* my gentleness
Into a *bitter* fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of her goodnéss;
And she also to use new-fangleness.
But since that I *unkindly* so am servéd,
'How like you this?' — what hath she now deservéd?"

We conclude that Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch went to Chalmers' *English Poets* first, following the example of Palgrave, his master, and found the version as he now presents it, though with the original title. A man of his literary distinction must, however, have recognized that this version was not Wyatt's original, and we, therefore, give him credit as an ideal anthologist for preferring it. Without digging further for the moment into the origin of this later version, let us see what necessitated it. It was evidently re-written for a popular audience who could not be expected to understand the archaic "thorough" for "through", nor the "strangë" for "strange", nor the rhyme falling merely on the last syllable of "servéd", nor the accenting of "déservéd", nor the use of "kindly". "How like you this" is patched in from a previous stanza to fill out the

last line, which to a popular audience unable to appreciate its satiric meditative slowness would read feebly enough. "I would fain know" is probably regarded as padding, whereas it is the continued indignation of "so kindly". Sir Arthur was wise in giving the public what the public could understand: as it was unlikely that anyone would go back behind Chalmers, no indication was given in the anthology that the text was not Wyatt's original. As a matter of fact, Chalmers, Palgrave, and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch have a common source: Tottel. Apparently, between the writing of the poem about the year 1536 and its printing in 1557, some hand, possibly Tottel's own, made these changes. So Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, in this case at least, is the ideal anthologist, again, copying from the ideal anthologist; instead of getting the vexatious manuscript reading from Doctor Nott's edition long ago published from the Harrington MSS.

Respelling is a matter of less importance; even the obstinate poet himself will sometimes allow the printer to have his way in matters of correct usage: but to do, say, with William Barnes what school-editors have done with him, to transform his fantastically-printed Dorsetshire dialect into educated English, is a public service which our hero will not hesitate to undertake. Examples of daring repunctuation are particularly common in anthologized versions of Shakespeare's sonnets. We have commented fully on the treatment of "The Expence of Spirit in a Waste of Shame", in another critical work.

A further quality necessary in a popular anthologist will be an almost morbid modesty. He must be able to bring a blush to his own cheeks by the very thought of all the indecencies and blasphemies he has come upon in his rambles through the elder poets; he must be as tender of the virgin-mind of his putative public as an old-fashioned mother of her daughter's, or a new-fashioned daughter of her mother's. But to this modesty we must add a great gift for stupidity in face of any difficult passage in a poem. At the first glimmer of any possible obscurity, he must shut his eyes tight and pass on in search of something easier.

Who actually are the present popular anthologists? They fall into five common occupational categories :

1. Irresponsible persons acting often in the name of charity.
2. Minor poets disguised sometimes as college professors, who wish to bully the public into accepting them as major poets by the level of this anthology.
3. Literary editors who have easy access to the contributory volumes and are on good enough terms with publishers and poets to get copyright matter cheaply.
4. The publishers themselves.
5. Poets with a reputation which the publishers are anxious to help them capitalize as an offset against the comparatively poor returns that their individual volumes of poetry usually bring in.

But, in practice, do they fall so far short of the ideal possibilities of their work?

Let us portray the popular anthologist thus equipped with the mental and moral qualities that his task enjoins, sitting down to it and preparing a scheme to cover all the demands which may be put upon him. He must first settle upon a time and space limit. Let us suppose that he has chosen a grand panoramic view from the earliest beginnings, e.g. *From Beowulf to Binyon,* but that his space is limited to the five-shilling or one dollar-twenty-five cents octavo in stiff boards. He is to provide "the best", that is, representative poems by the most famous authors; to whom he will allot page-space according to their fame. The public cannot be expected to understand that page-space and poetic quality cannot be equated; that Fitzgerald with "Omar Khayyám" and Coleridge with the "Ancient Mariner" are not all that much better than Landor's usual short contribution of "Rose Aylmer", "Ianthe", and "I strove with none"; or than John Fletcher's of "Oh fair sweet face", "Hence all you vain delights", and "Man is his own star". So it will be necessary for him to cut "Omar Khayyám" as it has been cut in *The Oxford Book of English Verse,* or omit "The Ancient Mariner" in favour of two unimportant Coleridge

items, as *The Golden Treasury* has done (under the pretext that it is less "lyrical" than "Omar Khayyám", which is given in full on account of Tennyson's high estimate of Fitzgerald.

His first act as an anthologist will, therefore, be to decide on his page-limit, to choose his list of authors according to an imaginary popularity vote, and then allot his page-space in descending order of generosity. Shakespeare fifteen pages, Keats fourteen, Milton thirteen-and-a-half, Wordsworth the same, down to Southey, Poe, Samuel Rogers, and Laurence Binyon one-half apiece. Next, he will draw up a list of subjects from which to choose his poems, such as :—

Triumphant Love.
Renunciation in Love.
Christian mystic Love.
A Hunting song.
Farm-house life.
A Sea piece.
A Spring piece.
A Garden piece.
Remembrance of Childhood.
Grief for Departed Friends.
A Pastoral.
A poem about a Train.
A poem about England, and/or
A poem about the Stars and Stripes.
A battle piece.
A poem about a dead child.
An Irish piece.
Miscellaneous.

In choosing these poems, he will look for the proportion given in the old punch-brewing recipe :

One of sour,
Two of sweet,
Four of strong,
And eight of weak.

He must go a little farther afield than his predecessors but not too far afield. Though he must not use too much of the material from the two established anthologies—*The Golden Treasury* and *The Oxford Book of English Verse*—the same list of authors must be fairly closely observed, and the same type of poem. For instance, the "Intimations of Immortality" may as a subject be allotted to Henry Vaughan's "Retreat", as Sir Algernon Methuen has done, while not robbing Wordsworth of page-space. Or a poem other than "The Old Familiar Faces" may be found to put over Lamb's signature. The new page-length importance of Rupert Brooke being realized, the poem about the Glorious Dead must be allotted to him instead of to Campbell or Collins; and

his "Grantchester" may take the place of Browning's "Home Thoughts from Abroad." The farm-house piece may similarly be entrusted to Edmund Blunden or Robert Frost instead of to Crabbe or Samuel Rogers.

Since there are two divisions of the public to gratify, the public that wants pleasure and the public that wants literary small-talk, the arrangement had better be for pleasure, with the literary references tucked away in a small-print appendix. There must be an index of first lines and one of authors' names; and a list of acknowledgments to publishers. The rest of the anthologizing may safely be left to the printers and binders. The title must be the battle already half-won. So Mr. Adam Gowans prefaces his *The Hundred Best Poems* (*Lyrical*) with:

> "Let me frankly admit to begin with, that the attractiveness and probable selling qualities of the title of this little book proved, when it had once been thought of, too powerful arguments in its favour for it to be abandoned".

This preface, as it happens, provides a ready model for our anthologist to imitate:—

> "I am fully conscious of the presumption such a title implies in an unknown selector, but at the same time I submit. . . I can assert without fear of contradiction that every one of the poems I have included is a 'gem of purest ray serene', that none can be too often read or too often repeated to one's self. . . In conclusion, my very warmest thanks are due to Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for permission . . . to Messrs. Smith Elder & Co. for a like privilege . . . also to the following gentlemen. . ."

The best introductory preface would be one anthologized from all the anthology prefaces. As follows:—

> Poetry is the light that never was on sea or land, and the homely glow in the cottage window; the star in the sky and the fire on the hearth; the careless laughter of children and the dreams of the man of business; the glare of the footlights and the sacred flame on the altar; the jewels of the privileged few and the common coinage that everybody handles. . . .
>
> —*The Bookman Treasury of Living Poets.*

> All the gems in this volume are not of equal brilliancy: the diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls of literature are few;—but there are other gems than these, of inferior value but

still gem-like;—agate, cornelian, amethyst, turquoise, onyx, and scores of others known to the lapidary and jeweller and prized by them and by the public to whose appreciation they are offered.

—*One Thousand and One Gems.*

Nor have I sought in these Islands only, but wheresoever the Muse has followed the tongue that among living tongues she most delights to honour.

—*The Oxford Book of English Verse.*

The poet touches life at every point; he paints all phases of human existence and in moments of exaltation he mounts to ideal regions and sees . . . the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending. To such a vision the common man is not wholly blind. He knows without seeming to know what is beautiful and true.

—*From Shakespeare to Hardy.*

Like the fabled fountain of the Azores, but with a more various power, the magic of this Art can confer on each period of life its appropriate blessing: on early years, Experience; on maturity, Calm; on age, Youthfulness. . . .

—*The Golden Treasury.*

But there is no arbitrary isolation of one theme from another, they mingle and interpenetrate throughout, to the music of Pan's flute, and of Love's viol, and the bugle-call of Endeavour, and the passing-bell of Death. . . .

—*Poems of To-day.*

At this point he might stumble on such contradictions as this:—

"Every poet writes for the general public or he would not complain when it neglects him, and the greater poets sooner or later make the wider appeal".—(Mr. St. John Adcock).

"Poetry is the most private of the arts, the art of the man who can live independently of the crowd".—(Mr. Robert Lynd).

But our ideal anthologist would, undoubtedly, be able to harmonize them somehow.

Perhaps most of all the anthologist must remember that his public loves personalities. A poet's self-portrait will always be welcome. Keats must be presented standing tip-toe upon his little hill; Mr. Yeats standing smothered o'wit on the Dublin pavement deliberating a journey to Innisfree; Gray as little Tommy Stout pulling poor pussy sadly out of the water; Milton in a comic Shakespearian part making vain clutches at his late

espouséd Saint (not the one he was so angered at not being able to divorce); Burns interrupting the ploughing of his crooked furrow to address maudlin apologies to the daisies and mice he was disturbing; Shakespeare violently and unaffectedly in love.

This brings us back to the obvious truth that most present-day popular anthologies and anthologists are after all not so very far from what they should be. *If* they should be. If we were superior critics, we should have only to point to the gross imperfections of a particular anthology and wait with disapproval for the next. Being humble realists we have thought that perhaps once it is clearly shown that the popular anthology can only be what it is, there may be no next; or, at least, that, having had the dull capacity for showing that the anthology cannot help itself and that it is congenitally defective, we may make it impossible for criticism ever again to waste vanity or time discussing its short-comings.

Laura Riding.

Robert Graves.

ANNUNCIATION

SUNLIGHT through vines, the drooping trellised bower
Shielding the white wall of my father's house,
Beneath the tranquil eaves with luminous shade
Where early sun lit up my attic window
And quick birds' voices in a freshing shower—
Upon the white cool bed for ever abandoned
On burning beds mechanically paid —

Morning then changed then this was morning then ?
I did not think I should again recall
Transparent dawns for all that darkness stale—
This limpid light once more should waken me,
And from the hot eyes of accosting men
Shield me by all this radiance of garden
In an impenetrable changeless veil ;

And now, in limpid shade waiting, walled
By sunlight from the world that all defiled—
Sunlight, the world beyond, and this, my child
That shall be nothing of begetting world,
Rising, see him ! Defends he, upright, called ;
Whom half-believed—I—breathe him—rising, see him,
With lustless eyes who beckoned me and smiled !

And, as in that light room when I was small,
As if shaded by thin leaves in this harsh room
I, whom so many have passed with naked thigh,
Sheltered by the yellow rattling blind
That lets the London smoky sunlight fall—
Over this public bed down through a quick dawn,
Feel the low pains and know the hour is nigh.

ALEC BROWN.

SUMMER

THERE had been a great rain so that, although it was early August, the leaves had begun to come down in the wind. The boards of the bench that was nailed against the trunk of the tree were black from rain and needled with rot, with scales of lichen laid between in the cracks. The old lady had gathered her skirt up as she sat and it hung in strong solid folds through her loose fingers. Leaf by leaf the hills of the country grew up through the boughs of the tree, and the distant goats in descent of the ledges were seen as if falling on stiff legs through the branches.

The face of the girl was like a narrow mirror set out under the tree. It reflected with bitterness the torn leaves which the rain had pressed down upon the grass, the grains of rod pollen on the old lady's coat, and the lips drawn in in pity and solace about the flutter of the old lady's breath. To be with the old, she thought, made nature a catalogue of parts. To sit with blood as still as a snail's track was to observe the pores of the mud and veins in leaves which action might signify as a soft wet embrace of the brow. To walk slowly without end or direction meant a perception for small objects only.

The girl began again, thinking this time of it, with an unreal rhythmic vigour as: there had been a tremendous rain so that the leaves slapped down on their faces as they strode up under the swinging boughs. . .

The old lady moved her head gently from side to side as the young man and his companion came past them. The girl sat at the old lady's soft elbow, thin and sullen and resentful of the discriminations of the mature. The odour of aged breath shifted at intervals across her nostrils.

"There is so much we must learn to avoid," said the old lady through the uncertain wings of her breath, "both in the female and the male. Instincts of breeding that direct one. . ."

The path was set with large stones and was narrow, so that in climbing the hill the young man had dropped a bit behind his companion and walked with his eyes on the movement of her limbs under her skirt. She was a youngish woman with a dark rich skin and black hair rolled in her neck.

"There is only the thickness of a hand's breadth of wall between us," said the old lady holding her delicate old hand up before her. "But do you think he considers that? As for me, you've remarked yourself that I've done the only thing possible under the circumstances, holding my head high as I pass him in the dining-room".

He was climbing on, up the hill, still slightly behind his companion. When he paused with her at an open space and turned to look down into the valley, he thrust his legs apart and stroked his bare palms up and down the blonde throat of his cane. The girl could see his head thrown back on his neck and his lips moving under his moustache; and then the soft bark of his laughter coming down the hill to them. With her head swaying from side to side with her words, the old lady spoke again of the appetites of his fingers and of the disease that hung bright black in his eyes.

When the girl heard this, she sat with a secret exultant shame burning in her, repeating it in her mind. She thought of the savage unknown appetites of his hands and body, and of the disease hung like an omen in the black mad lamps of his eyes. It was a shaming fire in her that she must sit close to to shield and to cool with her own cold sullen flesh.

"They go up into the hills," said the old lady, "way back into the hills, and spend the whole day there. . ."

The girl sat thinking of this, and listening to the old lady's voice in pursuit of the young man and his companion: the worn, worn voice drawing strength from them as it went after them up the hill.

"I am not too old," said the broken voice in the old lady's

throat, "still to feel resentment against the abuses of decency, decency".

The girl felt the old lady going quaveringly and fiercely on with them, closing the collar of the young man's shirt with her quivering fierce fingers, following them to know in an agony of outrage the separate blades of the grass crushed under them, and the daisy cores that the frenzy of open fingers would scatter like yellow coin.

The old lady sat with her hands gathered up on the head of her cane, marking fresh circles in the mud with the agitated tip of it. She was so outraged, being drawn out of the isolation of her own hungers into the grossness of this alien thing. She sat beating off the intrusion with the precise dance of her cane. But her frail old voice kept storming up the hill after the young man and his companion.

"What could any good, good people be at in the hills all day, all day that way?" she said. "A good brisk walk is another thing. Can you tell me that?"

At night the girl would sit by the bed reading aloud in the old lady's room.

"It puts sleep in me," the old lady would say. Her underwear hung slightly stained over the back of the chair.

" 'The healthy school is played out in England,' " the girl was reading, " 'all that could be said has been said; the successors of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot have no ideal, and consequently no language'. "

The old lady's head lay quietly on the pillow, repeating tediously from time to time that she was unable to hear. The girl moved nearer and nearer over the bed, leaning forward from her chair and reading aloud at the great naked ear. She knew that if she read slowly, slowly diminishing her voice, the old lady would go off to sleep. Her face hung over the bed and over the old body under the blanket. The old soft arms were bare out of the gown. She sat reading, and slowly withdrawing the sound of her voice. She heard it in her own ears, tapering and dwindling off, as if the solid rings of revulsion were pressing it thin in her throat.

When she knew the old lady was asleep, she could think about the book as she read it, and wonder about language and if there were perhaps some now so new and so incomprehensible that it could serve only to wound them. She felt herself setting out in thought, reticent and proud, and bitter in a small clean way like a cat selecting its paws. But she wanted to believe that there was something fresher and deeper that came of the mind, some force of which she would demand nothing if it would only *be*. She wanted to believe in a language that burned black the tongue of the one who spoke and scarred the one who listened. She was ready to be humbled, but adequately humbled, not by the hate that beat all night at her pillow, nor by the love that slipped off down her cheeks at night acrid into the corners of her mouth.

The old lady's head had fallen aside on the pillow and she was breathing aloud through her mouth.

The girl could hear the steps of the young man as he came down the hall. He had fitted the key into the lock and come into his room. The girl started reading again, beginning in her false, gentle voice and blurring the words with her tongue. As she heard him moving about in his room she felt the stiff feathers of her heart beating against her ribs. He had come in alone and he was singing to himself as he laid off his clothes. She sat reading to the old lady, willing sleep like a death upon her, filling the great soft ear with sound to keep sound of the young man from her.

Presently, someone came down the hall, walking gently as though in slippers, and into the room to him without pausing at the door. The girl went on with her reading and whenever her eyes left the page they would fall down upon her own body, down the long hollow of her breasts and over her own hands and limbs. She kept turning her eyes in so that she could see something that was not herself, and when she paused in the reading she felt her eyes threshing back and forth under her lids. In the centre of her mind was a small hard burning light.

The voice of the young man was sounding out as though heard over water, a deep, swaying bell swinging down like a tool

on metal. And the silence of his companion hung between the two rooms, stirring back and forth between them like a soft, soft hammock hung under strong trees. Everything in the old lady's room was meticulous and sharp to the girl, neat and small corners and legs of furniture tossed up like little boats on the terrific water which went on under and about them, sending them dancing like crazy men, sending the little white tufts of cotton flapping like burnt butterflies over the quilt. The girl sat reading, pressing the book down solid on her knees and reading out the words; and the great dancing orgy of silence wove and tore strongly in the room, tossed up the little grunts of the old lady's breath like corks on the smooth mouth of the horizon.

She read for a long time in terror and pain, with her wild soft thoughts beating about the closed light at the centre of her mind. When the woman had finally gone out of his room and off down the hall and left him alone, the girl could hear him sitting up in his bed and beginning to cough. The springs of the bed cried out like bats as he shifted up on his pillows, and the spasm that had no sound of his voice wrenched him back and forth by the shoulders.

The old lady came suddenly awake.

"He's come in," said the old lady in a whisper. "Do you hear him?"

She turned her head to hear the hard, quick beating of his cough, the beating of a peeled heart cut out of a body and beating dry and hard and quick in the room.

"How can I sleep with it?" said the old lady's whisper across the bed. Her eyes were loose and dim with abuse.

The girl listened to the lean shrivelled heart of the sound as it beat—alone in the middle of his room with no grief fierce nor great enough to come to it. And then it began to run in a frenzy in his room, patting with quick hard paws on the glass of the windows. It was a trapped fox barking in frenzy to get out of the room, and flinging down with its soft, gasping belly on the young man's belly, its worn, thin bark snapping its teeth at his chest.

She waited for something to happen. She sat rubbing the

palms of her hands dry in her dress. "But cry out, cry out, cry out, my love", she cried to him in her heart. She thought that he would cry out with a great sound, or that he would open the door and get out from the thing and leave it cracking like a dry, white fire in the middle of the room. But there was nothing to come of it, except for the sound to dwindle off in a point, even the sound of the springs whistling like bats, and the point to become a long needle of pain in her. There was nothing else to come of it. She emptied the old lady's pot, replaced it in the little table by the bed, and went down to her own room.

In the morning the young man came out in his soft grey clothes, lounging and talking with his companion and moving in his fine white skin. She had filled her palm with yew leaves stripped from the little boxed tree as she passed it, and she laid them carefully out on the top of the table, standing and holding them down absently with the tips of her fingers as the young man went off to find chairs. He came drifting down the terrace to the table at which the old lady and the girl were seated.

"May I trouble you," he asked, smiling at them under his moustache, "but is this chair taken?"

He had put his hand on it as though to bear it away from them and the old lady regarded him from under her white bang. She drew carefully in her glass of Vin Bourdou.

"Tell him it is, my girl", said the old lady.

"Im afraid," said the girl without looking up, "that it is".

KAY BOYLE.

COMPONENTS OF MEMORY

AT such an hour, under the cliffs, the sea—
It does not matter with whom or why—and waves
Disposed a scene, and laughter and movement
Pointing the action with their casual stress. [spoke,

Then freely moved, in wind and sunlight running,
Watching the silver warning of the storm
And shadows flowering in the crystal morning,
We shared the solace of a trivial language.

Not now, "Your lips are flame or your eyes stars",
Nor words half-numb with labour of precision;
Yet eyes supplied a commentary and mind
Reviewed the same inscrutable sad text.

* * *

Seen, and once only in that moment seen.
Mouth I can no longer question, mouth
In acquiescence once surprised but now
Grotesquely scarred upon a half-turned mask.

Bud then in momentary philosophies—
Gardens upspringing in reflected sunlight,
Where colder phantasies than mine may mingle
Scents to allay the raucous stench of death.

"Under the darkness, leaning in the wind" . . .
And other details might prolong this moment.
Now at each fresh encounter Mind recoils
Before that mouth constrained in thin-lipped silence.

Memory withers; the tall flowers bowed down
With liquid pealing of the bells of sense.
The clock ticks out its endless metaphor.
Ecstasy lingers, but the trance has broken.

DOUGLAS GARMAN.

FROM BAUDELAIRE'S *JOURNAUX INTIMES*

THE unclassified notes which Baudelaire left among his papers were of two kinds. The first were simply ideas which seemed to him of interest, and notions of stories, etc , which were never written. The second, which date from the last few years of his life (1821-67), were meant to be developed in a book which was to be called *Mon Cœur mis à Nu.* His conception of this book is described in a letter to his mother, June 5th, 1863 : "Yes, this book will be a book of spite. Certainly my mother, and even my step-father will be respected in it. But, at the same time that I relate my up-bringing, the way in which my ideas and sentiments have been formed I shall make unceasingly felt my sense of being foreign to the world and its religions. I shall turn against *all France* my real gift for insolence. I need revenge as a tired man needs a bath."

But the *idéal* of that *spleen et idéal* that split Baudelaire's life would have had its place here too, as some of these notes show. The misery and disease of his last years are only too visible in the later entries, but his continual struggle to reintegrate his personality, in face of the "gulfs" which always fascinated him, is so clearly visible that there is none of his work, outside his poetry, more pertinent to a real understanding of his genius.

Enthusiasm applied to anything other than abstractions is a sign of weakness and disease.

* * *

Nations have great men only in spite of themselves—like families. They do all that they can not to have any. And so the

great man needs, in order to exist, to possess a power of attack greater than the power of resistance developd by millions of individuals.

* * *

Whatever is not slightly out of shape has a look of insensitiveness; whence it follows that unsymmetry, that is to say, the unexpected, surprise, astonishment are an essential part, and the characteristic, of beauty.

* * *

There are moments of existence in which time and space are more vast, and the sense of being immensely increased.

* * *

There are certain almost supernatural states of mind in which the profundity of life is completely manifested in the scene, however commonplace it may be, in front of one. It becomes the Symbol of it.

* * *

Self-purification and anti-humanity.*

* * *

The Dandy should aspire to be sublime, uninterruptedly. He should live and sleep in front of a mirror.

* * *

To be a useful person has always seemed to me something particularly hideous.

* * *

Of the baseness in any calling whatever.

A Dandy does nothing. Can you imagine a dandy addressing the people except to fool them?

There is no reasonable and certain government except the aristocratic.

A monarchy or a republic, based on democracy, is equally absurd and weak.

There are only three respect-worthy beings: the priest, the warrior, the poet. To know, to kill, and to create.

Other men are fit for the pole-tax and the labour-gang, made

* *This phrase is in English in the original.*

for the stable, that is to say, to practise what are known as the *professions.*

* * *

To be a great man and a saint for one's self, that is the sole important thing.

* * *

Auto-idolatry. Poetic harmony of the character. Eurythmics of the character and the faculties. Maintain all the faculties. Augment all the faculties.

* * *

The belief in progress is a sluggard's doctrine, a doctrine of Belgians. It is the individual relying on his neighbours to do his job.

There can be no progress (true, that is, moral) except in and through the individual himself.

But the world is made up of people who can only think in common, in groups.

There are also people who can only amuse themselves in troops. The true hero amuses himself alone.

* * *

The ineradicable instinct of prostitution in the heart of man, from which springs his horror of solitude. He wants to be *two.* The man of genius wants to be *one,* therefore solitary.

Fame, is to stay *one,* and to prostitute one's self in an individual way.

It is this horror of solitude, the necessity of forgetting his *I* in external flesh, that man nobly calls *the love-need.**

When I have inspired universal horror and disgust, I shall have won solitude.

* * *

It is imperative to work, if not from taste, at least in despair, since, it is thoroughly proved, to work is less tedious than to amuse oneself.

* *Or as a contemporary exhorts us in "The Saturday Review", with a winsome look-back to Marvell,*

"Then let us keep for ever fresh
This warm Eternity of Flesh,
This only true reality
Of lip-to-lip and knee-to-knee".

Is not work the salt that preserves mummied souls?

* * *

I have always been surprised that women should be allowed to go into churches. What can they talk to God about?

* * *

There is a great resemblance between the act of love, and torture or a surgical operation.

* * *

What is so tiresome about love is that it is a crime in which one cannot dispense with an accomplice.

* * *

The world only gets along through mis-understanding.

It is through the universal misunderstanding that everybody agrees.

For if, by mischance, we understood one another, we could never agree.

The man of intelligence, he who is never in agreement with anyone, ought to set himself to enjoy the conversation of idiots and the reading of bad books. He will get some bitter enjoyment from it which will largely make up for his fatigue.

* * *

Saint-Marc Girardin has made an epigram which will last: *"Let us be commonplace!"*

Compare this saying with Robespierre's: "Those who do not believe in the immortality of their being do themselves justice".

The saying of Saint-Marc Girardin implies an immense hatred of the sublime.

Whoever has seen Saint-Marc Girardin walking in the street has immediately conceived the notion of a great goose infatuated with itself, but scared and running along the high-road in front of the coach.

* * *

It is impossible to look through any news-sheet whatever, of no matter what day or month or year, without finding there, in every line, the most frightful signs of human perversity, at the same time as the most surprising boasts of straightforwardness, of goodwill, of charitableness; and the most unblushing assertions

as to progress and civilization. Every newspaper, from the first line to the last, is nothing but a web of horrors. Wars, crimes, thefts, indecencies, tortures, crimes of rulers, crimes of nations, crimes of individuals, an intoxication of universal atrociousness.

And it is this disgusting appetizer that civilized man takes with his morning meal each day. Everything, in this world, exudes crime : the newspaper, the walls, and the face of man.

I cannot understand how an innocent person could touch a newspaper without a shudder of disgust.

* * *

What more absurd than Progress, since man, as the daily fact proves, is always similar and equal to man, that is to say, always in the savage state ! What are the dangers of forest and prairie beside the everyday clashes and conflicts of civilization? Whether man traps his dupe on the boulevard or spears his game in unknown forests, is he not eternally man, that is to say, the predatory animal in perfection?

* * *

Hugo often thinks about Prometheus. He applies an imaginary vulture to a breast which is lacerated by nothing except the itching-plasters of conceit. Then, the hallucination becoming more complex, varying, but following the cumulative process described by the doctors, he believes that by a *fiat* of Providence, Saint Helena has been moved to Jersey.

This man is so unelegiac, so uncelestial, that he would horrify even a lawyer.

Hugo the sacerdotal always has his head bowed, bowed too low to see anything except his navel.

* * *

The abolishers of souls (*materialists*) are necessarily abolishers of *hell*; in that they are, undoubtedly, *interested.*

At the very least, they are people who are *afraid to live again,* sluggards.

* * *

George Sand is one of those old *ingénues* who never want to leave the stage. I have read lately a preface (the preface to

Mademoiselle La Quintinie) in which she professes that a true Christian cannot believe in Hell. She has good reasons for wanting to abolish Hell.

* * *

I am bored in France, more especially because everybody there is like Voltaire.

Emerson has forgotten Voltaire in his *Representative Men.* He could have made a pretty chapter called: *Voltaire, or the anti-poet,* the king of novelty-mongers, prince of the superficial, the anti-artist, the hall-porter's preacher, the Mr. Punch of the editorial staff of the *Siècle.**

* * *

Every idea is, in itself, endowed with an immortal life, like a person.

Every form created, even by man, is immortal. For form is independent of matter, and it is not molecules that constitute form.

Anecdotes about Emile Douay and Constantin Guys destroying or rather believing that they destroyed their works.

* * *

All the idiots of the Bourgeoisie who have always on their tongue the words: immoral, immorality, morality in art, and other stupidities, remind me of Louise Villedieu, a five-shilling tart, who accompanying me once to the Louvre, where she had never been, began to blush, to cover her face, and pulling me every moment by the cuff, asked me, in front of the immortal statues and pictures, how such indecencies could be publicly displayed.

* * *

In the moral as in the physical, I have always had the sensation of the gulf, not only of the gulf of sleep, but of the gulf of action, of reverie, of memory, of desire, of regret, of remorse, of beauty, of number, etc.

I have cultivated my hysteria with delight and terror. Now, I am continually giddy, and to-day, 23rd January, 1862, I have suffered a singular warning, I have felt the wind from the wing of insanity pass over me.

* * *

* *An organ of "advanced", positivist opinion.*

To Honfleur !* as soon as can be, before falling lower.

What warnings and signs God has already sent, that it is *fully time* to act, to consider the present moment as the most important moment, and to make my *perpetual pleasure* of my usual torment, that is to say, of *Work*.

* * *

Every moment we are crushed by the idea and the sensation of time. And there are only two means of escaping from this nightmare, of forgetting it : pleasure and work. Pleasure wears us. Work strengthens us. Choose.

The more we make use of one of these means, the more the other fills us with repugnance.

One can only forget time in making use of it.

* * *

Without charity, I am only a tinkling cymbal.

My humiliations have been boons from God.

Is my phase of egotism at an end?

The faculty of responding to each minute's necessity, precision, in a word, must infallibly find its recompense.

* * *

I take my oath to accept the following rules henceforward as the eternal rules of my life :

To make my prayer every morning to God, *the reservoir of all strength and all justice, to my father, to Mariette, and to Poe,* as intercessors; to pray them to send me *the necessary strength* to fulfil all my obligations, and to concede my mother *a long enough life* to benefit by my transformation; to work all day, or at least *as long as my strength allows me;* to trust to God, that is to say to very Justice, for the success of my projects; to make a new prayer every evening, asking of God life and strength for my mother and myself; to make, of all that I earn, four parts—one for current expenses, one for my creditors, one for my friends, and one for my mother—to obey the principles of the strictest sobriety, of which the first is the suppression of all stimulants, whatever they may be.

* *His mother's home.*

THEME FOR *THE PSEUDO-FAUSTUS*

FAUSTUS, whose high-pitched brow glows in the mirror,
the focus of contemplation, the sacred egg
in which ambition spies the excellent bird
whose parturition shall incinerate
the old world and induce the reign of light,
contrasts the prophecy with circumstance.

The polar desolation of his state,
ringed-in with streets that tawdry wishes built,
contracts existence to the minimum.
Thought veils like lichen the rock-face of fact
whence of delight the polished ancient orbs
throw fretful rays, sunk deep in raw-rimmed pits;
free creatures whine, hide and shiver in cellars;
glucous emotions merely, like old women
wrapped against winter stepping into cars,
waddle in sequence from their banal function.
The authoritative world holds him still awed,
its splintering props seem staunch, he hears not
the underworking of its ruinous heirs.

For Merlin, master of mystery, spell-numbed,
frets in his green grave and the land stirs;
the lawless spirit faith reported chained
from low regions rises bright as the sky
before the sun puts out the stars; the Serpent,
casting his sheath, re-diamonded, lifts
the flat axe head against love's wounding heel.
Pride, mobilized in swift sub-human hosts,

the lithe and predatory thought of joy,
invests the earth : but Faustus in his deep dump
doubts of damnation and whimpers to his glass
'the holy egg is addled : we grow old :
there is nothing on earth to do, we are outside life.
Throw up the window? Or throw up the sponge?'

The golden figure of light strides through dawn fields,
the furrowed cloud-land yields the acrid sun;
Morning's thin air floods the streets like fresh blood
in sacrifice to the now-imminent pain,
so all our slaughtered desires take heart to rise
and lip life's puddle in the dissolving gloom.
The gluey envelope of being swirls
like ink in water and the senses' suit
soon tears to scarecrow flesh whose flapping rags
warn blind earth of certain hovering beaks.
The I is bodiless and, a mere stripped nerve
steeped in the culture of asceptic light,
throbs to the rhythm of the lilting rays.
The human concept like a shrivelled husk
rasps its complaint even on the breath of hope.
This air is spirit's blood, at every breath
ten generations die, 'but we remounting
through organizations now remote and stiff
to the quick vigour of the early men,
find no home-comforts by the primitive hearth.
Cock of the midden or flairing garbage-cans,
our brief dawn-crow is muffled in the wet
blanket of history; like a leching frog
caught in mid-rapture under the world's vast turd
we jerk exhausted limbs in endless folds,
and stifling, spitting, furiously frustrated,
perish, not budging, with intense exertion.'
This too-rare atmosphere flays the slow flesh,
eye-crystals crackle and the racked nerves smart,
sharp tides of pain invade and strain the heart,

oceans of tears sway before us till the blood
blots out that desert sea with its warm stream,
and the I retreating down familiar paths
creates defences from the terrible sun
and in its figurative way rebuilds
the altar and brothel of legitimate state
adjacent, with mean fanes darkening our streets :
the silver-swimming gutters bleach and fade
to sinks and sewers where tenuous spirits lap,
obscenely supine, the stale brink of day.

The demonstrable world remains, whose hordes advance
when waggons over cobbles beat the march
for hurrying feet to gain counter or bench,
and the vague faces query as they flow
the pavements, placards, windows for a sign.
Deprived of freedom in time, space and love
they seek enfranchisement in the air beyond
the city's silent rows of gnawing roofs,
expecting joy within the mouth of doom ;
drab rotting leaves on life's prevailing wind,
in pain and pleasure glued woman to man,
even to the grave's foul bed—or headstones lie.

Damned by foreknowledge, in the crowded hall
the tedious programme promises no end,
heaping fresh items in successive pain,
whirlpools and cataracts of scathing sound,
the sores and running ulcers that consume
the womb of silence and night's patient breast,
unless new instruments evoke release ;

The sabotage of all the delicate tools,
the swift insidious wheels, the quiet machines
where the cramped mind weaves endless slave-designs ;
the massacre of all the innocent shapes
with tendril-clinging arms and pulpy lips,

bastards of hand-grips, spawn of self-distrust;
the desecration of ideal desire;
the violation of the veiled design;
repudiation and the doom of pride,
the death-dance on the tight-rope of the will
taut over chaos crammed with serried masks;

destined immersion in a sea of waste.

GABRIEL FOSTER.

ART AND KNOWLEDGE

THE speculative energy and the peculiar intellectual misery of our generation have their root in the same fact: that we have no theory of knowledge, or rather, that we have so many. Every science is working with inverted eyes, discovering itself rather than its traditional subject, and the individual has a feeling of commiseration, a fellow-feeling almost, to see Institutions painfully and incredulously awaking to their mortal bodies after long godlike dreams. The tragedy of Theology, "sweet Science of God" slain by the inductive Method, was enacted in another century. At any rate, such sighs as accompanied those proud Caroline tresses to the block will not be found for the roundhead usurper whose humiliation is imminent. It was the popularizing amateurs of Science, properly speaking, who urged on the preoccupied professionals to claim the vacant throne of the "Scientia Scientiarum", fortified by the collapse of their brothers on the other side, the professorial philosophers, who, though adepts in explaining how such situations have been met in the past, were helpless in the face of their own ordeal. For it is certainly to the spiritual weakness of the "guardians of culture" at that time, as well as to more general causes, that we trace the formidable situation of to-day. Professor Whitehead and others now can disprove the pretension of Science to be the new inclusive form of knowledge, by disclosing its first principles; but they cannot, after this lapse of time, prevent it from being a habit of thought which it will take an unusually concentrated bombardment of right concepts to dislodge. The truth in its simple or intellectual form, as the Catholic Church in its moral wisdom knows, is not enough to convert the mind that has long nourished an error; it needs to be enforced spiritually—that is,

in a form as complex as the internal growth set up by the error. An idea, whether right or wrong, is spiritual when it has been lived.

No one with a real understanding of the nature of Art would expect it to address itself directly to such tasks as this, apart from the fact that it has, and always will have, more important things to do. Intelligent people alive mainly to moral urgencies find that position puzzling, but it must be insisted on with vigour; if necessary, with the most thoroughgoing intolerance. Yet in the present position of the sciences, many of which are functioning with unexampled brilliance, but all on shifting bases, one can imagine a seductive new synthetic theory detaching itself. Let us fancy a theorist—it is an existent contemporary type—whose exclusive interest in Art had always groaned under the "tyranny", as he would consider it, of the logical processes, and the persistent prestige of positive knowledge. He exults in the present wobbly state of every science's first principles and calls attention with gleeful malice to each fresh embarrassment of the self-conscious savants. He scans the learned reviews in a mood of sadism, which is constantly gratified by the sight of celebrated specialists, whom he envisages as the eternal autocratic foes of the artist and free spirits like himself, being as hesitant in deciding on small points as they were formerly confident about the final realities. And then an idea occurs to him to take advantage of the scattered condition of the enemy. He remembers that it was only a century or so ago that Baumgarten managed to insinuate Æsthetics into the Cabinet of the sciences, and he decides to go one further. "Why should not Æsthetics be proclaimed as the Scientia Scientiarum, and Art itself as the inclusive body of knowledge around which all others revolve, supplying it with the useful material which a positive programme, invalid though such must be, never fails to produce, and which it sifts, refines, realizes, and preserves, according to its canon, as the sole permissible corpus of truth? The situation as the Greeks expressed it is now reversed. Now it is the mass of so-called knowledge that is the chaos, and the stream of life, everyday experiences, the other reality from which

art has never separated itself—we are beginning to turn to it with relief as the only stable part of life. We see the thought-systems of the past as limited organisms, perception-complexes; and all knowledge being symbolic like expression, even the more acceptable conclusions of metaphysics stand in a similar relation to the Thing they contemplate' that the *ex cathedra* pronouncements of the Pope, 'God's Regent on earth', do to the actual will of God. A Catholic theologian, mindful of the rationalism of the Scholastics, says that God, although omnipotent, cannot square the circle. We likewise, mindful in our turn of the fragmentary and symbolic nature of all acts of comprehension, declare that God, although immanent, cannot be expressed without translation. Art should be the form of knowledge with most prestige at the present time, because all others are approximating to its condition. Empiricism, imagism, organism: thinkers in all forms are coming to recognize these delimitations of their instruments. They can hardly fail to admit too that Art alone has always known these to be its first principles, and has flourished in proportion as they were observed. They must make the choice, then, between two things: either to re-constitute their rules in accordance with the laws of æsthetics, which is an absurdity by their former pretensions; or to continue as usual, knowing beforehand that the results achieved are false until they become embodied in the alien system of Art. And that is unthinkable".

There seems to me to be nothing illogical about such an extreme position, so long as no more be claimed for it than that it is a possible hypothesis in the present situation of the sciences.*

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* Less persuasive, I think, is "Neo-Classicism", the literary version of a reactionary Latin philosophy which is being adapted, in one or two English reviews, into a repressive instrument of literary criticism. Strangely enough, there would appear to be a final sympathy between the working results of these applied doctrines and such a view as the one in inverted commas above, which is at the opposite pole doctrinally. The mixed merits of "neo-classicist" literary criticism: the verbal sobriety which disguises its positivism, its calm and socialized demeanour

Perhaps the most effective answer to the art-worshipper we have imagined as making the statement would be to convince him that such a *coup d'état* would be, not beneficial, but horribly injurious to Art; that instead of expanding the scope of Art this new responsibility would immediately put out of action its unsurpassable natural powers. But such a question, if it arises, is solved for each man by a few minutes' introspection. Leaving aside the matter of the reality of the work done in the non-æsthetic forms of knowledge, the mind that feels no reality in its more logical processes and no *need* for a positive science, while it may with justice congratulate itself on the consistency which will grace its future operations, has no other cause for congratulation. People whose thought-desires are shallow will always tend, by the law of their own inertia, to confound the various ways of knowing and, under pretence of perpetuating a state of consciousness in which all are combined, suffuse them all with the condition of that one which comes nearest to the passive—the automatism of a receptive mood when it is either prolonged beyond its due point of time or extended to inappropriate situations. Here the only knowledge is the immediate experience, and in every experience the object is animistically endowed with the volitional and creative action which is the natural function of the subject. It is generally supposed that there is one exception among states of mind in which object and subject come near to exchanging positions: at the moment of essential æsthetic appreciation. This idea, though it undoubtedly corresponds to the general *sensation* of the experience, is a seriously misleading description of what, so far as we can analyse it, actually happens. Æsthetic experiences are discon-

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in the midst of the revolutionary concepts by which we are surrounded, and its genuine but exaggerated docility to the world of learning: these certainly are not the danger-signals of a summary æstheticism. Yet by applying to the interpretation of those great works of literature which proceed from the clash of permanently antagonistic cultural forces, the dogma of an exclusive cultural value, the critics of this school often effect a foreshortening of the object of thought similar to that which follows the pure æsthete's denial of all definitive cultural values.

tinuous, undivided, and self-wrapt* : in them the drifting, fickle emotion which accompanies everyday mental activity is suddenly reconciled to the object of thought. It is mainly this that distinguishes them from ordinary intellectual operations, which do not placate, but subjugate the human mind's incessant awareness of the vulnerability of its contents in continuity. How far the intellect as such is actively involved in æsthetic experience has always been a troublesome point for æstheticians, and they have accordingly been inclined to under-rate, even to deny altogether, the extent of its participation. The Continental philosophers, who for the most part have interested themselves in the transcendental significance of the problem, were naturally enough hostile to a more psychological approach that would tend to rejoin two of their final categories, imagination and reason, which it was vital for their metaphysics to keep distinct. The general tendency of English thought, on the other hand, while it assigns an ever wider sphere of influence to the creative processes once deemed to apply exclusively in Art, is to isolate the act of æsthetic *appreciation* as an experience appealing in its own right, rather than to determine the value of its results in relation to those of the cognitive faculties.

The question has first to be properly posed, and then pursued, by psychologists and preliminary investigators before any results can be available for the comprehensive theory of knowledge demanded by the situation. In what precise ways can Art be called a way of knowing, and how will its new status react on the other forms of knowledge in the next classification of the sciences? For, though we may rightly resist the temptation to fling up over these temporary chasms the fairy-bridge of an æsthetic dogma, it cannot be doubted that the introspective habits now invading the sciences will give them a new warrant for curiosity about the standard æsthetic mystery. Knowledge as

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* That they are also *rare*, in both senses of the word, is a fact which is hardly appreciated, in either sense of the word, by the inveterate conversationalists of Art who are the "treacherous eunuchs" of its particular Empire.

such affects primarily the contents of the mind, Art primarily its *disposition.* It serves no purpose to destroy that distinction by substituting for two clear terms one which, though it might simplify the metaphysics, would confound the psychology of the question. The only fruitful mode of approach is first to fasten on the relations between the depositions of knowledge and the dispositions created by Art. That right location or harmony of the particulars is as essential in a conceptual as in an artistic scheme is one of the truths that will always need to be reinforced in those sciences which resist the æsthetic discipline. Many of their practitioners seem to think that the universal conditions of thought are satisfied if due observance is paid merely to the special rules which every science evolves locally for its own convenience. Some of them, indeed, still affect the attitude to Art that Peacock paraded in *The Four Ages of Poetry,* and speak of their professional method as if it heroically exempted itself from the condition of all human knowledge, that truth is to be sought by a delimitation of the existing material. The æsthete could as effectively boast that Art is superior because its synthesis is brought about without the Hegelian humiliation of thesis and antithesis, or that, whereas Kant had to complete the equipment of his cognitive man phantasmally, with a categorical imperative, Art contains its own imperative. Such dialectical scorings, though illuminating for the person whose final attitude they illustrate, can content only those who are already contented with an irrational or a partial philosophy of action. The logical situation cannot be ignored. But it may be transcended. Every achievement of the mind is determined by an individual's necessity. Out of the inexhaustible free possibilities of being one presents itself to him as an imperative; and as a result his "free" necessity, embodied in institutions, becomes an ineluctable necessity for others. The solution in the problem of knowledge, as in all fundamental problems, will be supplied by the individual or individuals, in whatever science, who shall surpass the exigencies of the present situation by disclosing the exacting features of a new one.

Bertram Higgins.

NOTES AND REVIEWS

THE LION AND THE FOX. The rôle of the Hero in the plays of Shakespeare. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. Grant Richards, 16/-.

A just criticism of this book would entail a complicated and arduous labour beyond the compass of the present, or any, brief review, a labour enforced as much by Mr. Lewis's defects as by his merits as a writer. For, while Mr. Lewis has the uncommon merit of writing what is in his own mind and not what is in the minds of other people, it is a merit qualified by the fact that what is in his mind changes so rapidly that it cannot be dealt with as a content. By the time the reader is half way through the present work he has already learnt that whenever he notes for agreement, or disagreement, a controversial or improbable statement, he can be reasonably certain of finding it contradicted or recanted within the next fifty pages; and short of collating Mr. Lewis's conflicting statements and ascertaining which he will adhere to, the critic is forced to tread water till he finds his own *point d'appui*. It is not in minor points of detail that Mr. Lewis contradicts himself, one must add (or rather such inconsistencies are unimportant), but on matters where a definition of his position is vital to the progress of his argument : on the meaning of tragic art, on the function of the dramatic artist, on the relevance of historical and sociological criticism applied to an artist of the first rank, and primarily, throughout the book, on the relation of a work of art to actual life. It is Mr. Lewis's uncertainty on this point that involves him in perpetual confusion, and, combined with a psychologically related defect in intellectual honesty, gives all his work an oblique and precarious character which perpetually deflects our attention from what is being said to the sayer and his reasons for saying it. This is not only because Mr. Lewis has chosen a study of the Shakespearian drama and its author as a suitable stalking horse for the expression of his indignation with men and with life, which is what in effect he has done; but because, unaware of or unwilling to admit his personal preoccupations, he presents them to the reader as objective critical inter-

pretation. The truths of moral passion belong to one category of truth; the truths of critical imagination to another; it is conceivable that they might be used to reinforce each other by a candid and untrammelled intelligence; masquerading in each other's clothes they involve us in the embarrassing complications of deceit.

One other capital idiosyncrasy of Mr. Lewis's mind should be mentioned before dealing with the matter of his book. Despite his respect for human personality, his interpretation of human character is generally in terms of behaviourism. I should not imagine that Mr. Lewis would subscribe himself a behaviourist; and indeed, as a result of his imaginative inability to conceive an individual character, he frequently ascribes to human action an intelligent consciousness quite outside reality, a tendency that leads him into curious errors. A weak imaginative grasp of reality, however, commonly results in a mechanical marriage of extremes; and Mr. Lewis's men and women are always puppets, at one moment obediently behaving as the concentrated forces of their environment make it inevitable for them to behave, at another acting with a conscious will, foresight, and intelligence, truly Machiavellian, such as Mr. Lewis, I am sure, cannot have observed in any of his acquaintances, and which it seems improbable to ascribe to other human beings merely because they are dead.

To turn to Mr. Lewis's subject matter, whatever the defects in his treatment, he raises vigorously so many questions of the first importance, that the selection of a handful for comment is the only practicable method of criticism. The first two parts of the book are given to a reconstruction of the historical and sociological framework of Elizabethan drama. Mr. Lewis's main object is a demonstration of the psychological effects of contact with the sophisticated, self-conscious, and scientifically-minded Italian civilization on a relatively barbarous and politically unimportant England. Although this is the core of his argument, however, Mr. Lewis cannot resist (to choose one of many similar inconsistencies) remarking on page 41 that Europe "was not at that time accustomed to regard the English as a nation lost to anything but a dull oblique rapacity joined to a frigid moralizing", whereas on page 62, his indignation embracing past with present, he tells us that "the English had, from the start in Europe, their evil reputation for enormous dullness, as a community". The latter statement seems the more probable, on contemporary evidence, and is moreover in place in the argument. Mr. Lewis continues by drawing attention to the fascination of Machiavelli for the simple Elizabethan mind as the archetype of the ruthless and intellectual Italian, gaining with sang-

froid his subterranean ends by hypocrisy, treachery, and murder. He becomes, in short, for the Elizabethans the fox of his own simile; and from this obsession spring the Aarons, Eleazars, and Mendozas of the Elizabethan stage, and, most typical of an innumerable brood, Iago. An irrelevant chapter is given to Frederick the Great and his "Anti-Machiavel", which is of interest however, as an example of Mr. Lewis's inveterate rationalization of character. He is of the opinion, disagreeing with Voltaire, that Frederick wrote his "Anti-Machiavel" with conscious Machiavellian intent, in the face of every probability, in the general nature of men of action, and in the particular facts of the case, that Frederick was righteously and passionately shocked by presentation of the truth about himself. Mr. Lewis, in fact, can never leave well alone, and even drags in Goethe as a Machiavellian disciple on the strength of a couple of stray quotations. He proves his case, however, ably enough, and with a surplus of sardonic humour of more essential truth than the theme it embellishes.

Part III of the book is at once the shortest and the most valuable. The advance of historical science, using this term for convenience in the widest sense, in the last half century has benefited our understanding of æsthetics to an extent that is still unmeasurable. Leaving aside the advance of knowledge as a good *per se,* our æsthetic apprehension of an art form is definitely enriched by a consciousness of its origin and development; and Mr. Lewis has performed valuable services in the application to æsthetic problems of the results of modern historical research. In these pages Mr. Lewis discusses the choice of the eminent for the purposes of tragedy, and more particularly the primitive association between the idea of the semi-divine king (the Lion of his title) and the idea of sacrifice. While there is universal evidence of this idea-association and of its practical expression in a ritual sacrifice, our present knowledge, as distinct from intuition and guess work, of its psychological motivation is not obscure, but non-existent. Mr. Lewis makes so many guesses that, while a number of them are of intrinsic interest, the results cancel out. This, in a speculative essay, is unimportant, but since Mr. Lewis in these chapters is laying the premises of his interpretation of Shakespearian tragedy, a conclusion of some kind is essential in the place of half a dozen conflicting theories; and, in fact, this primary confusion involves the author in labyrinthine chaos as his argument progresses. Nevertheless, if Mr. Lewis passes off on us here and elsewhere intellectual excitement for constructive thought, his reincorporation into modern tragedy of its primitive elements is the one valuable critical intuition in the book. As he remarks on page 144 "The innocent looking, compassionate

representation of an agony and death, like that of Othello, with its catharsis by means of tears and pity is thus, as though in a dream, revealed as something else. It is a show of the same nature as a public execution". And while Mr. Lewis, confounding origin and function, is apt to exploit the emotion here described for sensational purposes, and, pushing his way himself among the crowd, to savour in the gush of real blood the authentic tragic thrill, this may be written off as the psychological price of an intuition vivid enough to be of value.

In Part IV, having laid his foundations, Mr. Lewis reaches the subject of his book which is an interpretation of the Shakespearian drama (exclusive of the comedies) and its author. It is to this part of the work that the opening remarks of this review are mainly applicable; and, indeed, in spite of many witty, acute, and valuable single reflections, and, in spite of the fact that Mr. Lewis's vitality of mind sustains our interest, at any rate, throughout, his fundamental conceptions of the nature of life and of art seem to the present reviewer to be involved in such inextricable falsity and confusion that any criticism of a few hundred words must necessarily be beside the point. To put the matter shortly, Mr. Lewis is so little concerned with his ostensible subject, and so thoroughly concerned with his reactions to the opinions of others, and, above all, to opinions of his own that he has abjured or is in the process of abjuring, that it is simpler to abandon the notion of objective criticism, and extract from his work an interest attaching to the confessions of a vigorous contemporary intelligence in the process of maturing.

One of Mr. Lewis's main objectives is an unmasking of the "sweet" and "gentle" Shakespeare of popular tradition, of the myriad-minded, impersonal Bard of Avon mirroring with benign equanimity the spectacle of life. As most popular traditions, this has a fragment of truth, in this case the obvious one that a great dramatic artist is unlikely to wear his heart on his sleeve so long as his vitality is equal to the strain the nature of his art (a dissimilar one to that of a lyric or satirical writer) imposes on him; in the event of a collapse of his vitality anything may happen, as "Timon", to go no farther, is sufficient evidence; a play regarded by Mr. Lewis as a supreme and typical Shakespearian tragedy. But that Mr. Lewis, or any person of intelligence, should ever have swallowed this popular dummy whole, as seems evident from the violence with which he rejects it, is quite incomprehensible. Mr. Lewis discovers in this work that Shakespeare must "personally, have suffered as much from the world about him as any of his heroes". Apart from the confusion in the words "his heroes", to which I will return later, does, or did, Mr. Lewis seriously believe that the artist is the true prestidigitator, pro-

ducing by sleight of talent something from nothing, and that the works of a great tragic writer are thrown off as exercises in literary virtuosity? Discussion of such matters is difficult, but one or two other quotations will reveal some of the contributory ingredients of Mr. Lewis's state of mind.

After debating the question whether Cervantes was or was not *attacking* (the italics are Mr. Lewis's) Don Quixote, he quotes some German commentators on Cervantes and concludes "such 'romantic' explanations seem the only ones compatible with the great beauty of this book". The only ostensible meaning that can be attached to this sentence is that great beauty = romantic beauty, the inverted commas conveying Mr. Lewis's opinion of those who are disinclined to admit this equivalence. The real meaning on the other hand, it is clear, is that the word romantic has no logical and personal significance for Mr. Lewis as a means of distinguishing one kind of emotion he has felt from another, but is a counter standing for a group of very heterogeneous ideas there is unfortunately no space to analyse here, but among which that of "greatness" is included, and which he has been led to mistrust, but, as it appears to him now, on insufficient grounds.

In another passage à propos of Professor Bradley's dissertation on the ironic stroke at the end of "Lear": "Albany. The Gods defend her! (re-enter Lear with Cordelia dead in his arms)". Mr. Lewis remarks "If we were looking for an influence to which to trace this ugly despair recurring so often in Shakespeare, we should be more likely to find it in the 'Maximes Traitant de la Religion', which I have quoted, of Gentillet than in the dogmas of Christianity". That a supreme tragic dramatist should have had recourse to a translation of Machiavelli for the "ugly" despair that is the raw material of his art (and which Mr. Lewis detects with astonishment in the mind of the author of "Lear", "Timon", and other plays he selects for analysis) is a hypothesis several degrees more remarkable than the Christian hypothesis he refutes, as remarkable indeed as any in the comprehensive literature of Shakespearian criticism.

Space must be found for one more quotation. "Hotspur and Coriolanus," says Mr. Lewis, "are as good physical heroes as Othello, but they do not apparently recommend themselves to Shakespeare"; and throughout the book he discusses characters created by the dramatist for his own artistic purposes, as if they were acquaintances met by Shakespeare in the course of his life, and his opinion of whom he had written down for the interest of posterity. This primary misconception vitiates all Mr. Lewis's criticism and is responsible for most of his more surprising statements. It is responsible for his repeated surprise at finding Shakespeare's tragic protagonists speaking in language

dissimilar to that commonly used in real life; it is responsible for his painful perplexity as to whether Shakespeare approved of his characters and the lives they led (leading him to remark on one page that the author had "the poorest opinion" of his creations, and on another that he had "an infinite love and compassion" for them); it is responsible for his fundamental misconception of the function of a dramatic writer, which leads him into endless discussions of "personality" and "impersonality"; and, finally, it is responsible for his astonishing lack of elementary discrimination not only in matters of quality, but even of kind, in dramatic work. Mr. Lewis cannot be unaware that comedy is one form of art, that tragedy is another, that a realistic representation of life is incompatible with either, and that the words tragic and pathetic are not synonomous. Nevertheless, histories, tragedies, interesting hybrids, are all presented to us, irrespective of kind and quality, botches and masterpieces together, as authentic and typical Shakespearian tragic drama; there is a Lion and a Fox and a *pathos* in all of them and that is enough for Mr. Lewis. Once what Mr. Lewis calls the organ-note of Shakespearian blank verse begins to sound (a habit caught from Marlowe along with his homosexual proclivities), he is unable, he confesses, to distinguish whether it is the voice of Richard II, Lear, Coriolanus, or another he is listening to, an inability which, unless Mr. Lewis is malingering, is an undeniable handicap for a critic. One can only conclude, either that Mr. Lewis wrote this book at top speed without having taken the trouble to clarify and relate any single one of his perceptions, or that he has chosen the wrong vehicle for his talents. The volume is chiefly remarkable for a spontaneous and uncompromising gift of satirical invective, as uncommon as it is valuable, and which deserves better game than the grosser imbecilities of Shakespearian criticism, on which it is mainly exercised here.

J. F. Holms.

NIGGER HEAVEN. By CARL VAN VECHTEN. Knopf, 7/6.
FLIGHT. By WALTER WHITE. Knopf, 7/6.
MANHATTAN TRANSFER. By JOHN DOS PASSOS. Constable, 7/6.
IN OUR TIME. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. Cape, 6/-.

Nigger Heaven is one of the negro names for Harlem, that dismal region of hard stone streets way up Seventh Avenue beyond One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street, where the popu-

lation is all coloured, though not much of it is real black. In the daytime, at least, the place aches with dismalness and a loose-end sort of squalor, the stone of the streets seeming particularly dead and stony, obscenely stony.

Mr. Van Vechten's book is a nigger book, and not much of a one. It opens and closes with nigger cabaret scenes in feeble imitation of Cocteau or Morand, second-hand attempts to be wildly lurid, with background effects of black and vermilion velvet. The middle is a lot of stuffing about high-brow niggers, the heroine being one of the old-fashioned school-teacherish sort, this time an assistant in a public library; and she has only one picture in her room, a reproduction of Mona Lisa, and on her shelves only books by James Branch Cabell, Anatole France, Jean Cocteau, etc.; in short, the literature of disillusion. This is to show how refined she is. She is just as refined as any other idealistic young heroine who earns her living, and we have to be reminded continually that she is golden-brown.

Round the heroine goes on a fair amount of "race" talk, nigger self-consciousness which, if it didn't happen to mention that it was black, would be taken for merely another sort of self-conscious grouch. There is a love-affair—a rather palish-brown—which might go into any feeble American novel whatsoever. And the whole coloured thing is peculiarly colourless, a second-hand dish barely warmed up.

The author seems to feel this, so he throws in a highly-spiced nigger in a tartan suit, who lives off women—rather in the distance—and two perfect red-peppers of nigger millionaire-esses who swim in seas of champagne and have lovers and fling them away and sniff drugs; in short, altogether the usual old bones of hot stuff, warmed up with all the fervour the author can command—which isn't much.

It is a fake book by an author who lingers in nigger cabarets hoping to heaven to pick up something to write about and make a sensation—and, of course, money.

Flight is another nigger book; much more respectable but not much more important. The author, we are told, is himself a negro. If we weren't told, we should never know. But there is rather a call for coloured stuff, hence we had better be informed when we are getting it.

The first part of *Flight* is interesting—the removal of Creoles—just creamy-coloured old French-negro mixture—from the Creole quarter of New Orleans to the negro quarter of Atlanta. This is real, as far as life goes, and external reality: except that to me, the Creole quarter of New Orleans is dead and lugubrious as a Jews' burying ground, instead of highly

romantic. But the first part of *Flight* is good negro *data*.

The culture of Mr. White's Creoles is much more acceptable than that of Mr. Van Vechten's Harlem golden-browns. If it is only skin-deep, that is quite enough, since the pigmentation of the skin seems to be the only difference between the negro and the white man. If there be such a thing as a negro soul, then that of the Creole is very very French-American, and that of the Harlemite is very very Yankee-American. In fact, there seems no blackness about it at all. Reading negro books, or books about negroes written from the negro standpoint, it is absolutely impossible to discover that the nigger is any blacker inside than we are. He's an absolute white man, save for the colour of his skin, which, in many cases, is also just as white as a Mediterranean white man's.

It is rather disappointing. One likes to cherish illusions about the race soul, the eternal negroid soul, black and glistening and touched with awfulness and mystery. One is not allowed. The nigger is a white man through and through. He even sees himself as white men see him, blacker than he ought to be. And his soul is an Edison gramophone on which one puts the current records : which is what the white man's soul is, just the same, a gramophone grinding over the old records. New York is the melting-pot which melts even the nigger. The future population of this melting-pot will be a pale greyish-brown in colour, and its psychology will be that of Mr. White or Byron Kasson, which is the psychology of a shrewd mixture of English, Irish, German, Jewish, and Negro. These are the grand ingredients of the melting-pot, and the amalgam, or alloy, whatever you call it, will be a fine mixture of all of them.— Unless the melting-pot gets upset.

Apparently, there is only one feeling about the negro, wherein he differs from the white man, according to Mr. White; and this is the feeling of warmth and humanness. But *we* don't feel even that. More mercurial, but not by any means warmer or more human, the nigger seems to be : even in nigger books. And he sees in himself a talent for life which the white man has lost. But remembering glimpses of Harlem and Louisiana, and the down-at-heel greyness of the colourless negro *ambiente,* myself I don't feel even that.

But the one thing the negro knows he can do is sing and dance. He knows it, because the white man has pointed it out to him so often. There again, however, disappointment ! About one nigger in a thousand amounts to anything in song or dance : the rest are just as songful and limber as the rest of Americans.

Mimi, the pale-biscuit heroine of *Flight,* neither sings nor

dances. She is rather cultured and makes smart dresses and passes over as white, then marries a well-to-do white American, but leaves him because he is not "live" enough, and goes back to Harlem. It is just what Nordic wives do, just how they feel about their husbands. And if they don't go to Harlem, they go somewhere else. And then they come back. As Mimi will do. Three months of Nigger Heaven will have her fed up, and back she'll be over the white line, settling again in the Washington Square region, and being "of French extraction". Nothing is more monotonous than these removals.

All these books might as well be called *Flight*. They give one the impression of swarms of grasshoppers hopping big hops, and buzzing occasionally on the wing, all from nowhere to nowhere, all over the place. What's the point of all this flight, when they start from nowhere and alight on nowhere? For the Nigger Heaven is as sure a nowhere as anywhere else.

Manhattan Transfer is still a greater ravel of flights from nowhere to nowhere. But, at least, the author knows it, and gets a kind of tragic significance into the fact. John Dos Passos is a far better writer than Mr. Van Vechten or Mr. White, and his book is a far more real and serious thing. To me, it is the best modern book about New York that I have read. It is an endless series of glimpses of people in the vast scuffle of Manhattan Island, as they turn up again and again and again, in a confusion that has no obvious rhythm, but wherein at last we recognize the systole-diastole of success and failure, the end being all failure, from the point of view of life; and then another flight towards nowhere.

If you set a blank record revolving to receive all the sounds, and a film-camera going to photograph all the motions of a scattered group of individuals, at the points where they meet and touch in New York, you would more or less get Mr. Dos Passos' method. It is a rush of disconnected scenes and scraps, a breathless confusion of isolated moments in a group of lives, pouring on through the years, from almost every part of New York. But the order of time is more or less kept. For half a page you are on the Lackawanna ferry-boat—or one of the ferry-boats—in the year 1900, or somewhere there—the next page you are in the Brevoort a year later—two pages ahead it is Central Park, you don't know when—then the wharves—way up Hoboken—down Greenwich Village—the Algonquin Hotel—somebody's apartment! And it seems to be different people, a different girl every time. The scenes whirl past like snowflakes. Broadway at night—whizz! gone!—a quick-lunch counter! gone!—a house on Riverside Drive, the Palisades, night—

gone! But gradually you get to know the faces. It is like a movie picture with an intricacy of different stories and no close-ups and no writing in between. Mr. Dos Passos leaves out the writing in between.

But, if you are content to be confused, at length you realize that the confusion is genuine, not affected; it is life, not a pose. The book becomes what life is, a stream of different things and different faces rushing along in the consciousness, with no apparent direction save that of time, from past to present, from youth to age, from birth to death, and no apparent goal at all. But what makes the rush so swift, one gradually realizes, is the wild, strange frenzy for success: egoistic, individualistic success.

This very complex film, of course, does not pretend to film all New York. Journalists, actors and actresses, dancers, unscrupulous lawyers, prostitutes, Jews, out-of-works, politicians, Labour agents—that kind of gang. It is on the whole a gang, though we do touch respectability on Riverside Drive now and then. But it is a gang, the vast loose gang of strivers and winners and losers which seems to be the very pep of New York, the city itself, an inordinately vast gang.

At first, it seems too warm, too passionate. One thinks: this is much too healthily lusty for the present New York. Then we realize we are away before the war, when the place was steaming and alive. There is sex, fierce, ranting sex, real New York: sex as the prime stimulant to business success. One realizes what a lot of financial success has been due to the reckless speeding-up of the sex dynamo. Get hold of the right woman, get absolutely rushed out of yourself loving her up, and you'll be able to rush a success in the city. Only, both to the man and woman, the sex must be the stimulant to success; otherwise it stimulates towards suicide, as it does with the one character whom the author loves, and who was "truly male."

The war comes, and the whole rhythm collapses. The war ends. There are the same people. Some have got success, some haven't. But success and failure alike are left irritable and inert. True, everybody is older, and the fire is dying down into spasmodic irritability. But in all the city the fire is dying down. The stimulant is played out, and you have the accumulating irritable restlessness of New York of to-day. The old thrill has gone, out of socialism as out of business, out of art as out of love, and the city rushes on even faster, with more maddening irritation, knowing the apple is a Dead Sea shiner.

At the end of the book, the man who was a little boy at the beginning of the book, and now is a failure of perhaps something under forty, crosses on the ferry from Twenty-Third

Street, and walks away into the gruesome ugliness of the New Jersey side. He is making another flight into nowhere, to land upon nothingness.

"Say, will you give me a lift?" he asks the red-haired man at the wheel (of a furniture-van).

"How fur ye goin'?"

"I dunno. . . Pretty far."

The End.

He might just as well have said "nowhere"!

In Our Time is the last of the four American books, and Mr. Hemingway has accepted the goal. He keeps on making flights, but he has no illusion about landing anywhere. He knows it will be nowhere every time.

In Our Time calls itself a book of stories, but it isn't that. It is a series of successive sketches from a man's life, and makes a fragmentary novel. The first scenes, by one of the big lakes in America—probably Superior—are the best; when Nick is a boy. Then come fragments of war—on the Italian front. Then a soldier back home very late, in the little town way West in Oklahoma. Then a young American and wife in post-war Europe; a long sketch about an American jockey in Milan and Paris; then Nick is back again in the Lake Superior Region, getting off the train at a burnt-out town, and tramping across the empty country to camp by a trout-stream. Trout is the one passion life has left him—and this won't last long.

It is a short book: and it does not pretend to be about one man. But it is. It is as much as we need know of the man's life. The sketches are short, sharp, vivid, and most of them excellent. (The "Mottoes" in front seem a little affected.) And these few sketches are enough to create the man and all his history: we need know no more.

Nick is a type one meets in the more wild and woolly regions of the United States. He is the remains of the lone trapper and cowboy. Nowadays, he is educated, and through with everything. It is a state of conscious, accepted indifference to everything except freedom from work and the moment's interest. Mr. Hemingway does it extremely well. Nothing matters. Everything happens. One wants to keep oneself loose. Avoid one thing only: getting connected up. Don't get connected up. If you get held by anything, break it. Don't be held. Break it, and get away. Don't get away with the idea of getting somewhere else. Just get away, for the sake of getting away. Beat it! "Well, boy, I guess I'll beat it". Ah, the pleasure in saying that!

Mr. Hemingway's sketches for this reason are excellent: so

short, like striking a match, lighting a brief sensational cigarette, and it's over. His young love-affair ends as one throws a cigarette-end away. "It isn't fun any more."—"Everything's gone to hell inside me."

It is really honest. And it explains a great deal of sentimentality. When a thing has gone to hell inside you, your sentimentalism tries to pretend it hasn't. But Mr. Hemingway is through with the sentimentalism. "It isn't fun any more. I guess I'll beat it."

And he beats it, to somewhere else. In the end he'll be a sort of tramp, endlessly moving on for the sake of moving away from where he is. This is a negative goal, and Mr. Hemingway is really good because he's perfectly straight about it. He is like Krebs, in that devastating Oklahoma sketch: he doesn't love anybody, and it nauseates him to have to pretend he does. He doesn't even *want* to love anybody; he doesn't want to go anywhere; he doesn't want to do anything. He wants just to lounge around and maintain a healthy state of nothingness inside himself, and an attitude of negation to everything outside himself. And why shouldn't he, since that is exactly and sincerely what he feels? If he really *doesn't* care, then why should he care? Anyhow, he doesn't.

D. H. Lawrence.

THE THREE SITWELLS. By R. L. MEGROZ. The Richards Press, 8/6.

After an artist has proved by repeated achievements that he is stronger than the antagonism of the public, the inevitable chaperon appears to set matters straight. This he can only do, unless he is a good critic, by turning the artist into an institution as respectable as those which he has demolished. His virtues are forgiven him; his weaknesses are used to excuse them; and the contours of his personality are smoothed away until he is barely distinguishable from his predecessors. By the time the necessary showman arrives, the artist is generally over forty; most of our "promising young poets" are fifty.

The Sitwells have been more fortunate: much of what they have written is autobiographical; they have explained their own work in definite, uncompromising terms, and so the showman stands a poor chance of being able to domesticate them completely.

Mr. Megroz has the correct mental chassis for a hero-worshipper; but he is too impressionably enthusiastic to be able to

do justice to his heroes. He has no temperament or, at the most, a very bland one. Observed through his temperament, the Sitwells are not very interesting. This book might have been written about any Georgian poet. It is the sort of book which is always written about poets, and, were it not for the copious quotations which are there to reassure the reader, one might as well be reading E.M.'s *Memoirs of Rupert Brooke.* If the author had any preferences or even prejudices, his portraits might have been more real and his criticisms more convincing. His admiration for the Sitwells is divided accurately by three into three equal parts. As poets, Miss Edith and Mr. Osbert Sitwell are exalted almost to the same rank as their brother, who is quite by himself among the younger English poets. Mr. Megroz is evenly and equally impressed by everything that has to do with the Sitwells. He seems to treat the very incident of being born, or generated, as if it were an accomplishment equal to the writing of a good poem; for he devotes two preliminary chapters to the ancestry of the Sitwells which he manages to trace back almost as far as the vegetable kingdom—when the ancestors of the Sitwells "took root" in English soil. His genealogical investigation, which is conducted on heraldic rather than mendelian lines, is not very illuminating, though anyone who is either idle or inquisitive enough may ascertain from it how much the ancient Sitwells used to pay for their hats, beer, and gloves. Brilliant as the present Sitwells are, they cannot be given the credit for procreating their own illustrious ancestors; Mr. Megroz, however, manages in some way or other to implicate them in the process, and to slap them on the back as heartily as if they were responsible for the long chain of barons, bishops, and bores who preceded them.

Mr. Megroz makes copious allusions to French poetry, but at the same time makes it fairly obvious that he has not read half of what he talks about. *"Le Serpent"* is attributed by Mr. Megroz to Valery Larbaud! Mr. Megroz treats Rimbaud as if his work were mere artifice and talks about "the artificial paradise of *'Les Illuminations'* "! This is how he deals with Baudelaire—"It is hardly necessary to say that Baudelaire's mind was morbid to an extraordinary degree. This does not detract from the value to us of Baudelaire's poetry, because our response to it expresses our own mind not Baudelaire's", etc., etc. How then, did Mr. Megroz find out that Baudelaire was "morbid"? Was it from somebody else's "response" to Baudelaire? *"We"* presumably means Mr. Megroz and his reading public; and *"we"*, according to Mr. Megroz, are quite as good poets as Baudelaire or, at any rate, *"we"* are mentally superior to him, for *"we"* only need to read his work in order to improve

it; from our *reading* it the poetry derives more benefit, it would seem, than from Baudelaire's having *written* it. More examples of this kind of bungling are to be found in every chapter. Mr. Megroz's criticism is safest when it is unnecessary. Each of the quotations from the work of the Sitwells is described in prose before it is quoted. The description is often longer than the quotation from which it only differs in being more flowery, ejaculatory, and highly-jewelled—"This Phœnix of song [Sacheverell Sitwell] lighting the air with fire and dew serenades lovely things whose loveliness dulled senses do not catch—sunlit foliage, lucent water, plastic and elastic wind, the infinite variations of tapestried light and shadow". Now it is one of the great virtues of the Sitwells that they do not "serenade" the "plastic and elastic wind". Our nature-poets can do that. Sacheverell Sitwell only uses water and leaves to make poetry. Most of Mr. Megroz's criticism rambles on in this style, but it reads like a bad paraphrase of the poetry which it attempts to explain: and it is quite unnecessary, for the passages he quotes explain themselves quite straightforwardly.

Mr. Megroz is not insensitive to poetry and he has genuinely felt the virtues of the Sitwells' work; he shows a good deal of taste and discrimination in selecting passages for quotation; but he is no critic and has nothing new nor intelligent to say about the Sitwells. Like most writers of his kind Mr. Megroz shows very little caution in his use of such words as "genius" and "great", and flings them about without much respect for their meaning.

ROY CAMPBELL.

RUSTIC ELEGIES. By EDITH SITWELL. Duckworth, 5/-.

Miss Sitwell has cultivated very thoroughly in her work those qualities to which other people most object: she is on the safe side, for they are generally one's best qualities. She repeats all her mannerisms; but this book differs from her former work in that she does not deviate quite so often into the irrelevant. However, she still surrenders quite unconditionally to the demands of rhyme and metre. She will break the sequence of her thought to follow a rhyme anywhere and she will make use of any archaism to get the "correct" metre. Miss Sitwell is always being praised as a "technician". Her style is unmistakable and quite her own: but it is the result of her having no "technique" at all. She is as clumsy and unscrupulous, in her actual writing, as Robert Browning was. Her merit as a poet lies in her powers

of visualizing everything. She has nerves and senses which are far more important than a mere "ear" for rhyme and metre. She is not an original thinker; she is always attracted by the sort of theme that would attract a De la Mare, but she always manages to harden it and brighten it until, through its sheer impact on one's physical senses, it reaches one's emotions far sooner than any of the "softer" poets could do by trying to blackmail one's emotions straight away. In the "Elegy on Dead Fashion" she is merely dealing with the old theme of *"Mais où sont les Neiges d'Antan"*, in a new way. But this poem is probably the best that she has yet written. It is a pity, though, that a serious artist like Miss Sitwell, by the unnecessary introduction of too many French words in her poetry, should remind one, however superficially, of the prose of a certain celebrated Bloomsbury art critic.

R.C.

YOUR CUCKOO SINGS BY KIND. By VALENTINE DOBREE. Knopf, 7/6.

This book is the history of a little girl from her eleventh to her fifteenth year. She has no mother, and, therefore, spends part of this time in a country parsonage in the south of England, and the other part in a country parsonage in the north of England. Already deeply influenced by the injustices and cruelties of the first place, she enters the atmosphere of transparent charm and equable gaiety of the other, and, at the end, a bewildering, distressingly human blend of the two, she emerges to begin her new life with her almost unknown father.

If it is only for its simplicity and its profound truthfulness in the characterization of the heroine, Christina; for its recognition of her as a human being so far outbalancing its interest in her as that strange thing, a child; for its calmness in the face of the suffering it presents with such tragic power, this book must be placed very high among modern novels. But its unique charm is to be found in something far subtler which lies a little farther below the surface. One is suddenly aware of the spirit of comedy sitting somewhere in this extraordinary, serious book. It would be foolish to search for this in the treatment of Christina. She is consistently a serious and, indeed, tragic conception. But the other people in the book are handled in a surprisingly different way. There actually exist characters who are not characterized at all. The utter vagueness of Douglas and Lionel, the sons of the first parson, and of Margaret and Jane, the daughters of

the second parson, is quite disconcerting, for one feels that even people put in to make up the numbers should give out some sort of human atmosphere, until one sees at length very clearly that they are, indeed, not human at all, and that they, like all supernatural beings possess that property not possessed by mortals, of being of the utmost importance by their mere presence. And from this we pass on to the realization that Christina is the only human being in the story. The two parsonages are diametrically and symmetrically opposed other worlds, and Christina is, in the fullest sense of the word, the Hero, who must descend into Hell and ascend into Heaven, before his life in the world of mortals can have any significance. The symmetry is faultless. Mr. Harris and Mr. Dean are scarcely distinguishable, save that the one is an agent of evil, the other, with that "something divinely vegetable in his nature", the agent of good. Mrs. Harris is as unmistakably the Queen of Hell as Mrs. Dean is the Queen of Heaven, Mary and Lavinia are equally the spoiled and important favourites in these different regions, and Douglas and Lionel are simply a pair of extra devils, Margaret and Jane a pair of extra angels.

And these two worlds are essentially comic. The very physiognomy of Hell is so: "The house too had indulged itself and had lost a little its melancholy air. The summer decked it with garlands, for the still newly-green creepers crept up the walls and on to the roof, almost high enough to gain the chimney pots. But the house held them like hats, carefully out of reach, and the creepers snubbed, pried into the open windows".

The conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Harris when they receive Christina's father's letter is profoundly funny. But above all, Lavinia, the enchanting Princess of Heaven, with her preoccupation with hair-lotion and her faculty of doing always what she wants to and being always in the right, is a figure of comedy; I think, one of the great comic figures of literature. Nothing could be more comic in conception than the consternation produced in the Queen of Heaven when, the children having been told to write poems for a prize, Lavinia too lazy to write one herself sends in one that Christina has written, and the airy daughter of Heaven suddenly appears trailing the dark decaying garments of that other world whose existence the denizens of Heaven had not suspected until this mortal, to whom it is given to know both, came among them.

But, though there is so much food for laughter, one does not laugh for an instant throughout. The whole book is as serious as *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Though Heaven and Hell may be comic, the mortal who lives on the thin line which divides

them, is very serious. The moments of greatest depth in the book, the "sin" of Christina and Peter in the first part, her remembrance of this sin at the very moment when she is initiated into Heaven's secrets in the second, and the Indian doll nodding his eternal affirmation at the very end, are not of comic but of tragic profundity; and a tragic hero in a comic universe has never been anything to laugh at.

There is only one flaw in the book. At a critical moment the author's interest moves too far in the direction of Mrs. Dean, and makes her almost human at the very time when the form of the story calls for a far more formal treatment. It was, of course, to be expected that Christina would have some effect on Heaven, but actually the moment in which this is shown is the one moment in the story when one's interest is interrupted.

DOROTHY EDWARDS.

THE ANATOMY OF SCIENCE. By GILBERT N. LEWIS, Milford, 10/6.

THE QUEST OF REALITY. By A. WYATT TILBY, Heinemann, 10/6.

Professor Lewis and Mr. Tilby both take their stand on the pragmatical ground of the senses, through which alone do we perceive all things, phenomenal and real. Professor Lewis is concerned with the relativity of those concepts, with their elaborated sciences, to which our perceptions have given rise: Mr. Tilby starts with facts and figures, a statistical analysis of the functions and limitations of human faculty. That the senses are the final arbiters is, of course, true, but it is either a platitude or a somewhat inadequate statement of the truth. We must realize, with Professor Lewis, that, "even in the act of registering our sense impressions, they are being profoundly modified owing to the instincts that have come to us from long heredity, owing to our individual memories, to our sensations, and, above all, to our communications with other human beings".

With this reservation we may appreciate Mr. Tilby's just insistence on the problem of consciousness—response to external stimulus—as fundamental to reality. For response, in some form or other, is, as far as we know, common to the whole physical world, and the specialized active awareness of human beings has its counterpart in the general taking in and giving out of stimulus that is characteristic of all phenomena. Everywhere we

see "this faculty . . . . as an inherent property or possession, a kind of dormant consciousness or nascent sense of touch, which is common to the whole physical universe".

And if this claim seems to us extravagant, what are we to say to Professor Lewis?

> "As we meditate upon this mysterious phenomenon (the interference of light-waves as illustrated by Fresnel Mirrors) there constantly recurs to us the scarcely credible thought that in some way an atom in the source can foretell before it emits its corpuscle of light whether one or both of the mirrors are going to be uncovered."

The way in which he elaborates this with illustrations from the new "asymptotic" geometry, though extraordinarily interesting, is not relevant here; the point is that in the light of modern chemical and physical research such claims are not outrageous. Einstein has destroyed all established ideas of temporal sequence and causality, and Rutherford by his proof of the electrical structure of the atom has rendered entirely illusory our hard-and-fast distinctions between living and non-living, material and immaterial: if we continue to use these terms it is for convenience, realizing that we are dealing only with different, and by no means mutually exclusive, levels of energy. Both Professor Lewis and Mr. Tilby deal more with the physical than with the biological and chemical sciences: Mr. Tilby, very reprehensibly, does not even mention the concept of the "field", which is essential to the right understanding of modern thought in both science and psychology. And in the small part of his book which Professor Lewis devotes to the non-mathematical sciences his customary clarity and conciseness fail him. To explain evolution at all he finds himself forced to assume the inheritance of acquired characters. But in his anxiety not to trespass on the preserves of orthodox biology he distinguishes between mental and physical characters; only the former need be assumed to be transmitted. This is surely an illogical compromise, which will please neither the "orthodox" Weismannist nor the modern follower of Kammerer and MacBride. Nor is there any virtue in these water-tight conpartments, as Professor Lewis recognizes all through:

> "If in order to avoid the trouble of saying that the living individual exhibits both material and mental phenomena, we simply say that it has body and mind, let us imply no more than when we say that an electron has a charge and a field, recognizing that they are but different aspects of the same individual".

We may have to assume mutations in the process Matter—Life—

Mind, but the jump always consists of a sudden accession of development in a direction already well-marked, not in a direction totally new. What General Smuts noted as a universal tendency towards structure, and what Mr. Tilby notes as "dormant consciousness", are one and the same: the tendency of molecules to combine, of certain crystals to reproduce, of surface colloidal particles to show a curious selective property; the same property manifested in complex animal metabolism; the discrimination exercised by the senses between the whole amount perceived and the net amount absorbed for use in thought and action—all this is illustrative of a continuous and continual process throughout the physical world. We may call it Will to Live, Desire for Continuity, what we will; this "partial awareness" is the medium of existence and the means of progress.

> "Each successive step upward in the scale of life has been achieved by the individual organism capturing more energy, and applying it to one particular end, which differentiates it and raises it above the ruck of its fellows, and enables it to do things which they have not only never done, but never even considered the possibility of doing. And ultimately it may be that what the biologist calls an increment of living energy, and the psychologist defines as a growth of personality to the height of genius, and the religious denominate an inspiration or revelation from God, will prove to be one and the same thing".

So Mr. Tilby. In other words, the higher the level, the more intense the process, until in Human Personality we find an organism which is not only an extraordinary physical mechanism with an immense turnover of stimulus and response, but a mechanism with a dominating psychical control—i.e., surplus and transmuted energy—whereby the individual can not merely increase his powers over his own world, but also have glimpses of worlds other than his own.

For, if the proper study of mankind is man, the most characteristic is God. And so Mr. Tilby goes on to survey the Universe—the Universe of Various Motion—and we may be heartened or discouraged, according to our natures, that the physics of Einstein end up in the philosophy of Aristotle and the ethics of Æschylus. God is Pure Energy, Absolute Motion, Eternal Consciousness, these being ultimately synonymous. All ideas of Personality or Purpose we must dismiss, for these are finite, and God cannot be less than Infinite. Nor will Kant's Moral Law stand, since absolute consciousness must be contemplative and inclusive, differing in kind as well as in degree from finite

consciousness, which is selective and exclusive. If there is an ultimate principle, it is not Good, but Justice; there is an eternal inevitability of Cause and Effect, Choice and Consequence; in other words, Nemesis (a better word than Justice, which implies Equity) or Anagke, the *dira Necessitas* of Horace.

Of this there are two immediate criticisms. First, absolute motion is not a scientific conception, since, according to Einstein, any motion faster than light is inconceivable. If this seems arbitrary, we have only to think, as Professor Lewis suggests, of a temperature below —273°C. Secondly, to assume that the causality experienced in our one-way time implies a universal Necessity is hardly justifiable; certainly Einstein would not admit it. All through Mr. Tilby is oppressed by mechanist ideas of Cause and Effect and of the conservation of energy: the latter, as Clerk-Maxwell pointed out, is only a statistical law of physics; biologically it is inadequate.

The one constant factor that we know in the real as well as in the phenomenal world is Light. The speed and succession of light-waves are everywhere the same, though methods of reckoning them are relative and local. Light is the swiftest thing we perceive, and it is due to the comparative slowness of our own motion that space for us is three-dimensional and time only one.

> "Anything that travels slower, or apparently slower, than ourselves we tend to interpret in terms of statics, and, therefore, of space. Anything that travels, or seems to travel, faster than ourselves we tend to interpret in terms of dynamics, and, therefore, of time. . . . But what we actually perceive are different forms of the same thing, which is a dynamic universe whose phenomenal aspect is compact of perpetual but various motion".

Energy again. We are forced to the conclusion that not only is this the prime stuff of the phenomenal world, manifested in various forms of more or less static matter (depending on speed of internal structure) but that it, or something akin to it, is fundamental to the real world also, seeing that this various motion is demonstrably the property of the whole known universe, and that the major part of our external stimulus—Light—comes in a constant succession of vibrations, whose speed gives a constant measure of time.

But Light and Time are not themselves absolute; being not entirely immaterial, light consumes time in travelling through space. While, therefore, the passage of time is relative (Space-Time being a continuous procession of events seen from the

standpoint of our relative motion), the duration of time is real, "the permanent way on which time runs". This Duration or Eternity must, if anything, be the medium of the real world, as Space-Time is the medium of our perceptions.

Consciousness is always of an immediate Here and Now; Future can be forecast by Thought, Past recalled by Memory: Consciousness is by its nature inevitably actual and instantaneous. If a Universal Consciousness exists, it must be infinite, that is, an eternal instantaneous realization of a universal Here and Now. "Thy day," said St. Augustine, "is not every day, but To-Day; Thy To-Day is Eternity". And here again we may remember Aristotle, "God is either intelligence, or something in its neighbourhood".

> "Absolute Being that is conscious cannot . . . be anything but a universal Here and Now. And in that sense our intellectual conception of the universe as a process and becoming may eventually prove to be merely a necessary consequence of the limitation of our perceptions; whereas our actual consciousness, which is always Here and Now, may be a mirror which reflects this universal consciousness with perfect accuracy on the vastly smaller scale of finite individual life".

And this, as Mr. Tilby says, is extraordinarily significant, for it is just here that mystical and religious experience steps in with its claim that there is, for human beings at least, a higher and more contemplative consciousness, an intenser realization, in which the finite conditions of Space and Time are transcended, and a glimpse is caught of the medium of the real world, the permanent way which we have called Duration or Eternity.

And with this we may compare Professor Ward, quoted in Baron Von Hügel's acute essay on "The Idea of God",

> "There is an element in our concrete time-perception which has no place in our abstract perception of time. In time, conceived as physical, there is no trace of intensity: in time as psychically experienced, duration is primarily an intensive magnitude".

The analysis of supra-normal experience, with which Mr. Tilby ends his book, together with his earlier analysis of genius, forms the most illuminating part of it, though his neglect of the seventeenth-century mystics is rather surprising. There is no space left to speak of his method, which, when he does not overload his argument with illustration, is excellent; nor of his style, which, in spite of the difficulty of the subject, attains at times a curious felicity of phrase. But the conclusion stands. It is the genius and the mystic who are in the right of it; this store-

house of energy, this World of the Spirit, is there without to him that can take from it. How much we have taken already, the reign of the human race bears witness: evolution is the history of those who perceive more than their fellows, and our existence is the unwitting monument to much forgotten genius.

J. N. Wales.

THE APOLOGY OF ARTHUR RIMBAUD. By E. SACKVILLE WEST. Hogarth Press, 2/6.

The generations might almost be divided into those for whom Rimbaud is merely a "decadent", those for whom he is the author of some astonishing technical feats, and those for whom his life and work together present a problem of ultimate significance and a spectacle of tragic beauty. Not to realize this last is to be three parts dead, unless anyone can boast an internal life of equal intensity to his.

Mr. Sackville West has written an imaginary dialogue between himself and Rimbaud which is an interesting addition to the literature of the subject. He has taken from a new angle the problem—why did Rimbaud at the age of eighteen abandon literature, when he seemed to have it at his mercy? And how are we to postulate continuity between the mind which invented for itself new powers of expression and the African trader who expressed himself solely in the actualities of an onerous existence?

"Instead of those formal images, set down on paper", says Mr. West's Rimbaud, "what I wanted was the living realities which they sought so feebly to imprison". And in Africa he grasped them, or at any rate some of them, in a triumph that was necessarily, as he points out, ephemeral. And though physical collapse prevented any further success, Rimbaud is made to insist that he still holds "to the perfectibility and the value" of that goal, "above all other purposeful activities".

> "You yourself," he says, "belong to the type from which I seceded; your peculiar heaven lies in the true definition of the quality of your imaginative life. . . . . But I know that there is a greater thing, and that I came near to possessing it permanently, had my body not failed me at the crisis. For, however great the ecstacy to be enjoyed from the evasion of life that is art . . . . . it must in the final analysis of value be the fountain head—life itself—which takes the most important place".

This argument is hardly in the Rimbaudian accent, and we are doubtful if Rimbaud would have promulgated the blank distinction between life and art. One cannot oppose "life" to "art", but only physical activity to æsthetic activity. I do not think that Rimbaud would ever have said that the second, properly considered, was necessarily inferior to the first. The facts of his own very particular case would not have biased him to a conclusion in general terms, and I do not think a solecism is a sufficient reason for his sojourn in the hell where Mr. West found him.

But the point of view presented by Mr. West shows a great deal of understanding and one hardly expects problems of this kind to be "solved"—in the mathematical sense. The biographical material is well worked in. Personally, we think that the account of Rimbaud's early love-affair has a flimsy foundation in actual evidence, unless Mr. West has seen material unknown to us. On the other hand, his treatment of the Verlaine relationship (especially where it centres round the authorship and subject of "Hombres") is excellent and a good antidote to the crass insinuations of that medical-magisterial-*littérateur,* M. Marcel Coulon.

E.R.

GOD, MAN, AND EPIC POETRY. By H. V. ROUTH. Volume I, Classical. Volume II, Medieval. Cambridge University Press, 12/6 each.

Epic poetry has not been much written about by the younger critics and it is doubtful if genuine enjoyment of it is at all common nowadays. If it is not enjoyed, it is obviously a good thing that it should not be written about, but the neglect, with the consequent concentration of criticism on the lyric and shorter forms, is, perhaps, responsible for most of the more extreme propaganda which has infected our attitude towards all forms of verse composition during the last thirty years. It is difficult to see how the tenets of all the more or less subversive schools from symbolist to surréalist could have seemed at all plausible to any but those who were ignorant of, or for some reason antipathetic to, like Poe, the more extensive and exhaustive experience of epic poetry.

Yet, without identifying ourselves with those contemporary "lovers of verse" who, Mr. Routh says, "now expect to dissociate the purest and most felicitous poetry from any story of men's earthly pursuits, such as are portrayed in dramas and

satires; and to look for it in glimpses of the poet's own soul": or that we come "more and more to search in the words for what their author feels but cannot say"; without identifying ourselves with such contemporary "lovers of verse" and their generous quest, we confess to a certain ceremoniousness in approaching the vaster monuments of fame. One has not the same expectation of spontaneous enjoyment as in the creations of more restricted and intensive actions.

But, if we look at its productions without regard to their poetic quality, we shall see that there has been no diminution in the quantitative energy of the epic spirit. Simply, the poets with any glimmering of talent seem to have left the most ambitious themes to those who had none at all, or at least who drowned what they may have had in the infinite extension of their meagre narrative. In other words, given a man sensitive in the way a poet must be, would not the modern epic theme involve him in the necessity of representing such general and socialized emotions, that he would instinctively avoid the attempt?

The whole *raison d'être* of epic is its presentation of an heroic type in which the particular conflicts which most beset the consciousness or semi-consciousness of the race may be resolved. The fact that the earliest surviving creations of this kind were records of the achievements of the Heroic Age set all the poetasters copying the martial type of hero. Yet even as early as the *Odyssey* he had been succeeded by the "intellectual" hero, as Mr. Routh shows. (Of course, martial heroes appeared again in the Northern Heroic Age). But more important than this copying of externals is the fact that the products of the Heroic Age have a quite peculiar homogeneity—the poet's heart is beating in time with the great heart of the public in a way which is impossible in a society where the survival conditions are not so narrow as absolutely to stereotype the valuable forms of action.

But, even in the Heroic Age, we must remember that the poet only spoke for a caste, *Beowulf* is as much restricted to the aristocratic warrior caste as the *Iliad*. Where are the peasants and craftsmen on whom these civilizations depend? Probably they were not deliberately hidden, but no one thought they were worth making a song about. It was the *comitatus* that had to be worked up to the point at which the idea of its own heroism would involve it inextricably in heroic action in the next day's scrap. Epic, or heroic poetry, is strictly utilitarian; that is where it differs most from the lyric, and, as most theory has lately been based on the lyric, Mr. Routh's elaborate study should do a great deal towards getting critics to pull themselves together and reconsider the whole question of poetic composition.

And we must remember this caste origin of epic poetry when we ask, in a sentimental moment, where is the modern epic which has thrilled and inspired the race, from the highest to the lowest? Probably there never has been one (religious myths, perhaps, excepted). Certainly, various castes within the community have had their own epic cycles, though except for Dante and Milton's poems, out of these no poem of pure literary proportions has crystallized since the Heroic Age. In this respect, Mr. Routh might have dealt with the *Renart* cycle. Here we have, in the character of Renart, definitely the "intellectual hero" of a rising caste, the bourgeois (not the serf) which was beginning to get the better of its rather heavy-brained feudal lords—a ruling type surviving from the age of conquest, and of no use in a settled community.

Mr. Routh's study of the subject is crammed (too crammed, perhaps, for clarity) with material and with observations. He is particularly good in the way he brings fresh and significant matters to the discussion of the subject—for instance, he has a chapter on the *Inception and Significance of the Doctrine of Original Sin,* and his references to Hades-literature are striking and suggestive. We shall be most interested to see how Mr. Routh tackles the modern period, as he promises to do.

E.R.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1926. Edited by THOMAS MOULT. Cape, 5/-.

As no one else seems to have done so, it is left for us to state that this book is a disgrace to compiler and publishers. There is no particular reason why Mr. Moult should not name, and reprint, annually the poems he has liked best in the year's periodicals, but he might as well keep his selection private. It has already been so thoroughly demonstrated that he has neither taste nor judgment that it is quite unnecessary for him to go on exhibiting his deficiencies year after year. If he must publish, however, and this is also the publisher's concern, a more modest title would be becoming. The book might then rest in decent obscurity. As it is, it is necessary to protest, not merely that Mr. Moult's "Best Poems" are very nearly the worst, but that for any person, or even committee, no matter how well-qualified to offer to make any such choice is a pretension deserving ridicule.

Very few of Mr. Moult's poets have even a manner of their own. One or two contributors, however, achieve lonely eminence. Only Mr. Noyes, pausing momentarily from the composi-

tion of epics, could throw off the following lofty and original sentiments :—

"Know'st thou where that kingdom lies?
Take no lanthorn in thy hand.
Search not the unfathomed skies,
Journey not o'er sea and land,
Grope no more to east or west,
Heaven is locked within thy breast".

The superbly poetical "know'st thou" and "lanthorn" could proceed from the pen of this master alone, while Mr. Humbert Wolfe's friends, the elves, with their silver flutes are clearly responsible for :

"The echo of a song
makes all the stars a gong".

They would never ask in fairyland whether every star is transformed into a gong, or all the stars into one gong, since there they

". . . are impatient of truth, that is no more
than finite stain upon the infinite".

THE BEST STORIES OF 1926. Edited by E. J. O'BRIEN. Cape, 7/6.

Who is Mr. O'Brien that he should say which stories published in 1926 were the best? His volume is not so superlatively bad as Mr. Moult's; two such connoisseurs of bathos are hardly to be expected of one generation; but no one is likely to agree that no better stories than the twenty-one included were published in the period covered. The story, being a commercial article, is taken more seriously by most editors than poetry; story-writers are wanted by readers as poets are not, so that Mr. O'Brien is fairly safe in going by names—a Lawrence, if there is one, a Coppard, an O'Flaherty, one or two unknown to show his independence—and the trick is done. The result is a volume that is quite readable, though most of it is no more than competent hack-work. Bound up with the stories, however, is "The Year Book of the British and Irish Short Story" and this is really amusing. It begins with a list of "The Best British and Irish Short Stories". Mr. O'Flaherty has earned 22 honourable mentions; Mr. T. F. Powys 10; Messrs. De La Mare and Manning-Sanders 8 each; Chesterton, Maughan, and Phillpotts 7. There follows a list of "Articles on the Short Story", (21 on Michael Arlen, etc.). The book closes with "Biographical Notices", many of which are very funny indeed. The notices vary in length inversely with the merits of the authors.

SELECT LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. By U. M. ELLIS-FERMOR. Methuen, 6/-.

LA VIE DOULOUREUSE DE BAUDELAIRE. Par FRANCOIS PORCHE. Plon, 12 francs.

IMPENETRABILITY. By ROBERT GRAVES. Hogarth Press, 3/6.

THE EGO AND THE ID. By SIGMUND FREUD. Hogarth Press, 6/-.

ANTON TCHEHOV. Literary and Theatrical Reminiscences. Translated by S. S. KOTELIANSKY. Routledge, 12/6.

THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY, Vol. V. Athens 478-401 B.C. Cambridge University Press, 21/-.

THE MAKING OF RELIGION. By A. N. WHITEHEAD, Cambridge University Press, 6/-.

CELIBATES. By GEORGE MOORE. Heinemann, 10/6.

THREE NEW PERIODICALS

THE ENEMY. Edited by WYNDHAM LEWIS. Arthur Press. Quarterly, 2/6.

TRANSITION. Shakespeare and Co., Paris. Monthly, 10 francs. The complete text of James Joyce's new work will be printed consecutively in TRANSITION from month to month.

THE EXILE. Edited by EZRA POUND. Quarterly, 2/-.

LONDON AFTER NOON

A BOX of jellied brightness lie
The liquid cubes of London's sky,
Aquarium whose streets glass-bright
Hold evening's sea-pearl shoals of light.
Dim-illumined loosens, binds
A thawing swan-song traffic, winds
Its euclid-shaped, ghost-breathing files
Through serpentine street-winding miles.
Venuses in horseless shells
Niched calmly upon smooth-worn wheels
Madonna-like through shopping hours
Pass slowly—pale, deep-cushioned flowers
Whose exquisite thin orchid shapes
Red-lipped, have faces smooth as grapes;
Whose eyes are eyes of Lebanon,
Desiring what they have not known;
Whose eyes of Lebanon-coloured stones
Are murdered souls where all the tones
And hues of sunset dying round
Day's crucifixion, blazeless sound.

Than weeds cast up they smell more sweet,
Compactly perfumed are their feet,
Milk-pressed, cool hands, body perfect,
They are the very limbs of wit.
Within each shining limousine
Thou antique memory recline!
This oval thin metallic shell
Frames thee, O Lesbos whom the sea-swell

So sadly heaved when darkling spray,
Moon-whitened, broke the Paphian day!
Each bloom behind the hollow glass
Buries a lovely hope—alas
O lovely concept, in what mind
Can thy self this rock-crystal find?
Thou the blossom aching lust
To one brief moment moulded dust,
Stalactite of a vanished spring,
Feather of *flight,* air-curdled wing,
Immortal water taking shape
Against our lips. O lovely grape,
Lips against lips our hot hearts burst
Our seeds are mingled and we thirst!

Immaculate virgin, virgin mine
What of thy Venus-mother's thine?
Her sea-curled lips, her dark-sea eyes,
White billow of her shoulder? Rise
Aslant the dawn, Monotony!
Draw thy pure curve again for me
Thou changeless, ever-changing sea!
This face can never have been hers,
In it but fifteen infant years
Bury their fresh and tender dawns,
Griefless. Diana's daybreak lawns
With dewlight lit look not more cool,
More shadowless bright. Yet there stirs
The inward-pulsing heart—O shadow
Of that great fiery orb hung low
Beneath the horizon, awe of gold
Thin as a warm wind, I behold
Thee in her pallor—Aphrodite's
Burning-the-moonlight, naked body.
White fire of Dian's chaste-blue sea,
Blow thy gold Venus-bubble, be,
Orbed virgin, prostitute to me!

What shall I wreathe upon her hair?
Night's circle garlanded with more fair
Stars than ever skyward clomb
Before I entered in her womb
And from the darkness dug *Orion*
Procyon, Capella, Aldebaran.
And all the miniature flowers of day,
Love's faces of smiling agony.
Ah! from that bower she regards
Along the street the passing crowds
Whose loves are feeble, dirt-soiled, sad,
Cluster of lights who far-off have
Died to a pallid street-hung haze,
Dim milkyway lost in day's blaze.

Tell me, O Universe, this song
Of Venus whose variations throng
Imagination and multiformed are
All thy lovely phenomena,
What thin cry of immortal spirit
Is mute and not to be heard in it?

O lovely Irregularity,
Be thou my Symmetry,
Thy face unlike thy mother's yet
Is hers so new, so strangely set.
How could a mortal mother be
So beautiful, so unlike thee;
How shall I carve within thy womb
Of thee a yet more lovely tomb!
With such sepulchral images
Streets of dead loves, like arctic seas
With frozen waves, are memory
Of the warm wind that once passed by.

O hear the swan-song traffic's cry!

W. J. Turner.

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

EVERYTHING about Ellen and in Ellen's face is charming; and there is much that is wonderful. Her golden-yellow hair, interwoven with broad strands of auburn, is wonderful, thick as plumage and soft as silk. Wonderful too the tenderness and milky whiteness of her skin; wonderful the nostrils—netted with diminutive red veins—of her delicately tilted nose, and the shells of her very small ears—all looking like variations of one decorative scheme, carved by the same hand. Many people will think the charm of her face enhanced by a mouth which is a little broader than is quite in harmony with that nose and those ears. Ellen's mother was German. Whenever Ellen opens her mouth her upper jaw protrudes a little, and the enamel of her well-set teeth is a little deficient in one or two places. We must not omit the fact that Ellen's tall, slight, and lissom body is borne by legs which, like her mouth, appear to be more vigorous than her shoulders and her slender, very white hands would lead you to expect.

In Ellen's great blue-green eyes desire and recollection lie blended. Or rather, desire changes into recollection and recollection uproots desire. I suppose Ellen's eyes are like a poet's, full of amazement; but across this amazement non-amazement is drawn like a curtain.

Gazing, the poets penetrate into our depths; when Ellen gazes she loses herself, and we feel a painful contraction of our hearts.

Such is Ellen's face, such is her body, such are Ellen's eyes and her gaze. But what of Ellen herself?

Before we go on to speak of Ellen's personality we must not forget to mention that Ellen is rarely seen without her cousin and friend Eglantine. Who among us could try to think of Ellen without catching at least a mental glimpse of Eglantine's figure?

They were both the same height, and anybody seeing the two of them dancing together in the hotel lounge after dinner might very well have to watch their heads and scan their faces carefully in order not to make a mistake if they wished to know which was Ellen and which Eglantine—Eglantine who, by the way, since she has started learning music at the Paris Academy likes to pronounce her name in the French way and to hear other people so pronouncing it, Eglantine of the dark-brown wavy hair which she wears cropped short even over her ears (while Ellen's is only bobbed at the back), Eglantine of the lovely white teeth and the laughing eyes!

Are those eyes always as gay as they are just now while she is dancing, or later on during the interval, when the men will crowd around Ellen and Eglantine, when they will be looking at Ellen and talking and laughing with Eglantine? Is there not for him who would look more closely another look hidden at the back of Eglantine's gay looks, a look not by any means as gay, but rather piercing and at times even malicious? Eglantine is not pretty. In spite of her beautiful teeth and her neck which is very white, strong, supple, and—I can think of no other word for it—voluptuous, she can look quite plain at some moments. Her complexion is not very clear either, and what sticks in our mind is that her expression, when she is not actually flashing her teeth at us, is not always quite straightforward. Only when she is playing the fiddle do Eglantine's features become collected, clear, and calm, and even her colouring seems purer and more vivid. Have you noticed Eglantine's hands? Here are hands accustomed to drawing the bow, musicians' hands, slightly bent inward and curved, and not over-clean; hands showing a strong tension between the back and the palm like the tension there is between an animal's back and its belly, a cat's or a marten's, for instance; restless hands, the hands of a covetous person. And what pure, frank, relaxed hands are Ellen's, with one heavy, golden bangle only round her left wrist, hands open and revealing, blossom-like, fruit-like!

Is there not, perhaps, some hint of a conflict lurking between Eglantine's lovely laughing teeth and those small, restless, covet-

ous, rapacious hands of hers? And just such another conflict between Ellen's mouth and slightly protruding jaw, between Ellen's rapacious mouth—let us call it that—and her happy desireless hands? What a confusion! Is it possible, or rather, would it make sense to suppose that Eglantine's mouth is really Ellen's and Ellen's mouth Eglantine's? Such a thing does not exist. Ellen and Eglantine are not creatures out of a fable, not chimeras nor allegories in a fifteenth century decoration. We moderns, conceiving nature and individuality as we do, could find no meaning in such substitutions and metamorphoses, none other at least than we find in the chimeras depicted on cathedral walls. But, if we take the men of three thousand years ago, in whom the forces of the soul prevailed so much over the intellect, for them might not such a disseverance of face and body, such a substitution of parts have been fraught with a deep significance, or might they not have understood this patent disseverance to express a higher, superhuman, even divine union? Could it not be thus possible for one individual to love himself in another's features, to love himself back, lovingly to reconquer himself? If we go back to the mythical times of metamorphoses, was not then love the same as self-love, and again self-love the same as love? Was not the deepest meaning of metamorphosis this, that there is no contradiction, no enmity between love and self-love? Is Eros himself, master of metamorphoses, not love and love of self at the same time? It is only individuality as we conceive it that has drawn a line between the two.

Having already spoken of Eglantine's hands, let us go straight to Eglantine's character, or whatever name one likes to give to what is fundamental in a human being. If a person has a covetous nature, that implies their having a faculty for splitting up into different parts: into what they really are and can do, and into what they want and strive for. That is the covetous person's real nature. And their art and even their fascination consists in being able to join those parts into a whole at a moment's notice. In this sense her fiddle is part of Eglantine as one's arm is part of one's body. The fiddle must always be taken into account and on no condition must a covetous per-

son like Eglantine be told: "Your fiddle makes things easy for you; where would you be without it?" The point is, there is no Eglantine without a fiddle. Her covetousness overflows and the fiddle becomes part of Eglantine's soul; everything becomes part of her soul while she is handling it and remains dead or dies when she leaves off doing so. That is the way with covetousness and with covetous people.

Ellen, on the other hand, had nothing that belonged to her as the fiddle belonged to Eglantine, nothing, absolutely nothing. Ellen is nothing of an artist, she is not even gifted—not as most people would take it, I mean. Many people will pity her for it, but we only want to see Ellen as she is, and we have already guessed her impotence—oh, that is much too emphatic a word, but let it stand—from Ellen's white, granting hands.

How quick and eager is Ellen's admiration for any person whose mind is always set on a fixed purpose! For it is Ellen's nature to believe that people always succeed in doing what they have set their minds on. Ellen is devoid of envy, so much so that every stirring of desire in another person smacks of envy in comparison to her. It is certainly very pleasant and it means a lot, Eglantine feels, to be admired by Ellen; but she goes on to feel that it is not so much after all, less and less, considering that nothing will make Ellen go farther than that kind of admiration. When Eglantine, always plotting and scheming, asks for more, impetuously, because she thinks the moment for it has come, she wins nothing and loses all for the moment. For all her lack of gifts—as most people take it—and for all her awkwardness, nobody, not the greatest and mightiest of men, could hope to extract or win anything else out of Ellen's admiration, anything of a different sort or even at all differing from admiration, or could hope nimbly and surreptitiously to exchange that admiration for anything else on the borderline.

Eglantine knows herself to be at a disadvantage in this respect, she senses that Ellen is more fortunate than she, infinitely fortunate. That, at least, is what she calls her. What queer, extraordinary explanations for facts and situations Eglantine will think of sometimes! And this also Eglantine knows to be a

great privilege of Ellen's, that a gift given by her detaches itself from her as the fruit does from the branch it is growing on or as a planet detaches itself from the sun. Whereas, when Eglantine gives a present to anybody, and she does so very often, much oftener than Ellen does, her gift is never quite cut adrift from her; some substance of Eglantine will always adhere to it, and some of it will stay with Eglantine; and in the same way Eglantine will always be ready to interchange love and admiration or to try to extract one from the other; or what other reason could she have for going to extremes in everything? Does this not also show in Eglantine's hands, in those small restless hands of hers, never quite clean, rapacious, and full of shadows?

Eglantine, in a word, wants more than admiration only; she wants to be loved, loved by Ellen; that is what she most deeply, most secretly, most terribly longs for and desires. . . . "You must love me, Ellen, exactly as I love you. You must love me madly. That's how it is and how it must be, I suppose. Say you love me! I want to hear your mouth, your lovely mouth saying so! Say so, or there is no meaning left in anything".

It has already been hinted that Ellen was considered a dunce at school, and from school such judgments often somehow find their way into the home. Was Ellen really stupid or lacking talents? She was not fond of being asked questions, that is true. Or rather, in school and out, she hated those downright kind of questions—about a river, a town, or a date. Questions made her nervous and when asked made everything go straight out of her head for the moment. Such questions were like assaults, maliciously asked for Ellen's discomfiture. They ought to be put quite differently—how it is difficult to say. Certainly not so suddenly, from such a small distance. In a roundabout way, perhaps, drawing nearer in fine, wide circles, easily recognizable from afar off. Then Ellen would have been able to answer them all. Or rather—which is more important still—everything would be there, in existence, without any need for questions or for knowing names. And that, she supposed, was what really mattered, that things were there, in existence, real things and things imagined, and that they were all there to-

gether and mixed up with one another, so that there was no separating them out. Why have people invented these questions? For the sole reason that they try to separate the real things from the imagined ones. And for the sake of this separation people are so greedy, too, and so direct. . . .

Ellen had been playing all through the years of her childhood and her teens; that is to say, she had never, not for one single moment, been her actual self, she had always been what she was pretending to be in her play. She went to bed in her assumed character and woke up in it. That must be the reason why she had never played with dolls but had most of the time shared in boys' games. All this is certainly somehow linked up with the fact that those questions asked at school were an acute misery to Ellen. But who among those question-asking teachers, or who in Ellen's family could have been expected to know that her so-called stupidity or awkwardness or shyness was only another expression of, and was occasioned by, the extraordinary unity of her personality? A unity such as is very rarely met with in human beings, and which seems to be the very essence of the elemental sprites, like fairies, mermaids, and nymphs. Eglantine is the only one to sense this in Ellen. And this unity she believes and calls Ellen's good fortune. Eglantine's love is made up of a desire for such happiness and of the distress that she cannot share Ellen's, that happiness can never be shared, for only unshared, undivided, is it happiness.

It is only Eglantine, however, Eglantine the seducer, always hovering near the borderline, who could see or feel anything fortunate in Ellen's lack of aptitudes. To all the other members of the family Ellen appears stupid and awkward only. To Laetitia, for instance, Ellen's younger stepsister born of an English mother, Laetitia who seems as light and weightless as one of the seagulls flying up from the sea on to the fields at all hours of the day and lying there like snow—and who yet is full of a terrible positiveness; who has no imagination at all, but is thrilling with the expectation of all the things which are going to happen in her life and which, indeed, Laetitia's hard, birdlike determination is sure to bring about. The Easter holidays

are beginning to-morrow and Laetitia is expected home in the course of the afternoon. In the evening after dinner those dreadful games are sure to be played again in honour of her home-coming: writing down on a slip of paper all the things a gentleman or a lady packs into his or her trunk for the week-end; they must all begin with the same letter, S, B, or another. Whoever has finished first, or has written down most, wins. Laetitia is sure to bring little inexpensive prizes with her, which she will distribute. Laetitia is very inventive in that way.

Oh dear! What crazy, impossible things will come into Ellen's head at such moments! And always the most disconnected ones, too, and they are all put down in fits and starts after long intervals of despair. On Laetitia's page on the other hand one will find rows and wreaths of objects of the most necessary and at the same time the most delightful and exquisite kind. None of the indispensable things will be missing, but beside them there will be heaps of others that only a few people would think of. In the midst of objects that every smart woman is familiar with we will suddenly come upon "mousetrap", if it is to be M to-day. It's a funny coincidence that Ellen, too, has written mousetrap (next to "emu" which, however, for obvious reasons, will be crossed out before the slips of paper are collected). But on Laetitia's part "mousetrap" is a joke, the toying of a superior mind, whereas Ellen has put it down from sheer desperation, in dire necessity. Or again, how very smart Laetitia's "my hobby" sounds. Just like that, nothing else, right in the middle of a lot of practical things. I bet the old hobby-horse without a tail, its hind part gnawed by mice, stowed away in the lumber-room upstairs, will shoot through Ellen's head to-day, and if she refrains from writing it down it is only because there is no trunk in the world that will hold it. That is Ellen all over!

She has no bright ideas, the family think, and so does Laetitia, no imagination. Ellen might rack her brains and still find it impossible to invent a fairy tale out of her own head to tell to the children. Neither has she Laetitia's memory to enable her, by deftly combining some she has read and remembered, to make up a new one for the children's delight and to the ad-

miration of the grown-ups. It would be wrong, however, to say that Laetitia has imagination and Ellen has none. In reality it is Laetitia who has as little as the missing tail of Ellen's old hobby-horse and Ellen who has a lot. One is even tempted to say Ellen has nothing but imagination, for everything that Ellen imagines exists. What is there left to imagine? Ellen's soul is in this respect like the soul of mankind at the beginning of the ages. In the beginning there was no imagination, there was only the beginning, and the beginning itself was imagination, or the soul itself was imagination.

After what has been said it is evident that this imagination of Ellen's will show itself, especially in the presence of other people, in a manner that would seem ludicrous, at least for the moment. For example, meeting an individual whom she dislikes at the family dinner table or elsewhere, Ellen will not be content to vent her feelings by merely remarking to herself, what an objectionable person, and so on, but she will mentally ejaculate : What if I had to live with such a person ! or something of the kind. Catching sight of an ugly old beggar-woman : What if I looked like that ! Why don't I, I wonder? Or again : I might be embodied in that flesh and that fat and have those reeking clothes and might have to speak with that toothless beak. Or, walking to the underground station of a morning, on meeting a beggar sitting on the damp pavement holding out a stump for Ellen to see : Why am I not sitting in his place? Is there anything in the world as strange and as incomprehensible as that I am not sitting in his place and that he is not going into town shopping as I am?

This, however, is not compassion on Ellen's part, most certainly not any strong degree of compassion, although she gives beggars as much of her rather scanty pocket-money as she can spare. By giving it Ellen only wishes to demonstrate that money should not stand between her and another living being. All that matters to her is that the money should be gone and she would not care, nor would it make her angry to hear later on that the beggar had been a swindler. That is a very significant trait in Ellen and a sign of great genuine imagination, the

kind of imagination that is to be met with not so much in poets as in saints. It means that there was not only compassion in what Ellen did, there was, in a sense, as much cruelty there as compassion. It is impossible to separate one from the other in Ellen's character. Have we not said before that for Ellen it is impossible to divide her personality? With Eglantine cruelty and compassion differ very much from one another in the way they are expressed, and that is also the reason why Eglantine is so fond of the cinema, the stage, and the novel, and is so easily impressed by bathos of every kind.

In order to see Ellen's soul as it really is, in close contact with all that is most sublime, there is one thing more that we have to consider. The fact that in this world there are rich people and poor—unhappy lives struggling against misfortune and others that are carried up to great heights by luck—will inevitably cause something within us to rebel—our conscience or whatever we like to call it. In this sense every ego, every self-consciousness is a revolt. And most are like Eglantine in this, that they are full of compassion and yet very often behave with great cruelty in the critical situations of their lives. In other words, every man is at the same time himself and what he says, himself and the stage he is staring at. There is only one type of person who does not feel this mental rebellion and revolt, who is without a conscience, he who has the gift of self-transformation. We can perceive both, revolt and transformation, only when thus contrasted, for only thus is transformation, is revolt eternal. And in declaring Ellen to be transformed within herself we are saying that there is no revolt in her. Just as there is nothing but revolt in Eglantine and, accordingly, nothing but seduction and division. A person who feels no revolt is also devoid of compassion. Even if they distributed all their money to the poor it would be done without compassion.

Ellen's life is without adventure in the passionate sense of the word, as Eglantine would understand it. Ellen's life—or her soul—just consists in being a part of all that is great and sublime.

We have used the word transformation. What is transfor-

mation? Or what does it signify to be transformed within one's self? The answer is: to be without a purpose. A soul that is transformed within itself is purposeless. How are we to understand this purposelessness? In this way. We have said that Ellen could not bear the thought of money coming between her and other human beings; that is purposelessness in an extreme, unique sense. Eglantine is fond of giving people big presents—that white Scotch terrier is her present, who trots sadly along on the leash behind Ellen when she has to take him into town, but will run on in front happily, sniffing at choice bits of ground with minute precision when Ellen, to please him, takes a walk towards the fields and grass-grown building-sites of the suburbs —Eglantine who, as we have said, likes to give big presents and dislikes being given them—how characteristic of her both these things are—Eglantine is not purposeless.

Here is another example of purposelessness! Why is it that Ellen, on certain days otherwise quite undistinguished—or are they moments? They are moments only, immeasurably short—is unable to bear the sight of the big sharp knife lying about on the kitchen table near the window? Why does Ellen turn her eyes away? Oh, it is nothing, really! Words fail me to qualify the lack of insight anybody would display guessing at suicidal thought or anything of that sort. Oh no, never. Ah, how terribly blunt and unserviceable do words seem when we try to describe those regions of the mind where human speech cannot penetrate, although, or rather because, that is where its roots lie. What, then, are we to call this, which is in itself neither a feeling nor a dread nor a pain nor curiosity, but something of each? It is purposelessness, it is self-transformation. And so it happens that at a non-existing time and in a non-existing place this big sharp-edged knife cuts through Ellen's white body like a butcher's knife and Ellen's sweet, slender, supple body strikes against this gruesome object and is split open by it. . . . . That is what we mean by purposelessness, this is the realm of transformations.

Or again this: Ellen, getting her bath ready in the morning, first turns on the hot water only. How it boils and bubbles and

foams! And the more so the longer it runs. Ellen gazes at this boiling and foaming water—yet with a look in which there is nothing but suspense—a suspense verging on the uncanny; and, suddenly, this thought of all others makes itself felt: If I were to dive in now? Or: Why don't I go in and scald my skin so that it comes off like gauze or linen? The next moment she turns off the hot water tap and turns on the cold. Anybody observing her would notice the haste with which she does so. For the fraction of a second her whole being had shuddered, and tears—not of joy nor of pain, tears welling up simply as the last outward reflexion of this shuddering and trembling—are sparkling in her eyes as her shining body now glides down into the lukewarm bath.

Instead of purposeless let us now say limitless. It is, indeed, the lack of limits in Ellen which calls up in her such awe-inspiring visions. But we are applying this conception of the limitless, taken from the world of intellectual matter of the elements and space, to the sphere of the soul and the senses, the blood and the nerves; and so we find Ellen, by this very fit of trembling proving herself nearer akin to the elements and the stars of the greater spaces than any other human being we know of.

We must not forget to speak of a curious revulsion Ellen has against stones, pearls, and similar objects, since it is certainly related to the complex of feelings mentioned above. Ellen herself wears nothing but a heavy golden circlet round her wrist; it pleases her to think it symbolical, that its origin was a fetter. We must go on to remark about this idiosyncrasy that, within the sphere of the rational, it is by no means the antithesis to a superstitious belief in amulets, etc.; in truth, it is this identical superstition transferred to the sphere of the soul and the senses, only with a negative sign before it, and both, idiosyncrasy and superstition, bear the same relationship to one another as do left and right, male and female, fulfilment and bereavement. Whereas Eglantine—here the contrast between the two girls is particularly obvious and striking—loves ornaments, and it is only her consideration for Ellen which induces her to wear less of them than she possesses and would like to wear. There is no

denying that Eglantine in her inmost soul is very pleased, even delighted that the fashion of wearing imitation pearls is finding so many followers nowadays and that one may even be quite daring in that respect. Well, this is what happens one fine afternoon. Eglantine comes to see Ellen as usual, wearing for the first time, at least in Ellen's presence, such a string of imitation pearls, and a very fine and valuable one. Ellen only gives it a look expressing a feeling of discomfort rather than of disapproval, and certainly not of reproach. Whereupon Eglantine immediately takes the string of beads off her neck, not without a certain ceremony, and kneeling down she begins, in the same ceremonious way, to wind them round the neck of Teddy—that is the name of Ellen's terrier, asleep just now on the sofa. "Please don't, Eglantine", Ellen cries out, starting up. The idea of an animal hung with pearls is so repulsive that she tugs at them with a violence quite unusual in her. . . . The string breaks, all the beads roll off in different directions and have to be collected laboriously from under the chairs and cupboards. This is all that happens outwardly, but to Ellen it means a lot. Not for a long time, perhaps never, will she be able to forget what a malicious look came into Eglantine's face at the moment when the string snapped and the pearls burst away in all directions; how Eglantine's face had practically been torn by malice. It had not lasted long, only a few seconds, but Ellen would have given a lot—she often thought—not to have seen Eglantine's face thus torn by wickedness. When Eglantine had taken leave, quite appeased and reconciled, Ellen lifted Teddy, who had been deprived of his afternoon walk by the long chase for the pearls, on to her lap; slowly running her slender, very white fingers through the fine animal's silky coat again and again, she sat wondering whether what had just happened—this sudden outbreak of wickedness—had been bound to happen, whether this was because the wickedness was there, which part of a person it came from, to what part of life it belonged, where it disappeared, whether it disappeared at all or was lying in ambush inside a person like a robber behind a bush, and whether a person really was what she appeared to us to be in some moments.

There was a superstitious belief in Ellen, an introverted superstition, an idiosyncrasy of the soul, that love, if it really is love, breaks people up, destroys them or corrupts them; that she herself, for one, could only die, never live in love because—this is perhaps the best way of putting it—love is at the end of all transformations. We call this feeling of Ellen's an idiosyncrasy because we see or, at least, we guess at a mysterious connexion existing between it and the bodily idiosyncrasy we have spoken of. The reason why most people, nearly all, fail to be destroyed by love was, Ellen felt, this, that people put so much that is incapable of transformation, that is hard and finished, between themselves and other people—things like stones, pearls, money, and many others; and that was also why people never were what they really were, and why Eglantine could be so kind and so wicked at the same time and, perhaps, never her real self in one single moment of her life.

It once happened, many years ago, when Ellen had just grown out of childhood, that in the garden she saw a little frog being carried down a bank by a big one who was evidently making for the pond in the hollow with long strides. Greatly amazed and even alarmed by the spectacle presenting itself to her, Ellen knelt down and following the twin beast on her knees and picking up a little twig from the ground she very, very softly touched the little frog who was riding on the other one's back; whereupon it uttered a piping sound, a sound infinitely soft, unspeakably plaintive. Ellen's childish heart could not guess that this small beast sitting astride that big one, which had perhaps been its mother but was bride and mate to it to-day, was enjoying the sole moment of felicity in the short life God was granting it, and that—lacking all power of making distinctions, and every one of its utterances being the expression of an infinite unity—it was forced to express its greatest joy by the most moving complaint. Did it not resemble Ellen in this—the later, grown-up Ellen, I mean—who could love without love and be faithful without fidelity, and who for this very reason thought she could only die in love and through love and never bear to live in it?

Ellen was deeply moved in her childish heart by the aspect

of the little frog, riding and chanting its complaint, but she never questioned anybody about it—she had very early acquired the habit of not asking questions; however, ever since, she had the same dream, over and over again—that a huge beast of uncertain shape came and carried her off, just as she had imagined the little frog was being carried off by the other one so much bigger than itself. That was Ellen's dream. Every person given to dreaming has his particular dream. The decisive point in Ellen's dream, however, was not that she was being carried away from her home and her people toward some dread fate by some evil thing, but the fact itself of being carried away, of being removed, of there being no possible return for her. Here we have an instance of a person's intellect wrongly interpreting an event, while their soul by intuition is capable of divining another soul. This alone is the real truth of dreams.

This knowledge that return was impossible, that she was really only living for this non-return, that it was her last aim to be without an aim, is in a way responsible for Ellen's having a strong sense of propriety, but none whatever of justice. She felt there ought to be nothing but grace, that everything ought to depend on grace, be subject to grace.

This reminds us of another trait of Ellen's—the sublime being with her always blended with the ridiculous, as the little frog's complaint was with his joy. Ellen is in bed, and the clock in the next room begins to strike. Ellen knows the hour at every time of day and night by something within her, as the skippers know it by the stars. Just now she knows it is eleven. She counts, one, two, three, and each time or very often while she is counting, counting thinks: if only the clock would strike one stroke more—perhaps it will to-day. And she goes on counting and waiting for the one stroke that never comes and can never come.

The Greeks, when they thought of Tiresias, the great seer of the myths, as a hermaphrodite, a being in whom generation and fecundation were both accomplished and reciprocated, were only symbolizing the prophet's interpretation of the body by the soul and of the soul by the body.

Lastly, this signifies the perception of a unity; this unity we perceive in Ellen also, when, added to all the traits of her character we have been describing all along, we see one other, not to be accounted for rationally: her shrinking back from the notion of motherhood, her fear—encompassing both life and death—of having once to bear a child. Right at the beginning we spoke of Ellen's incapacity to divide herself. Is motherhood not also a division of personality? Is this division not at the bottom of that decisive organic process to which everything bearing shape or form owes its existence? Eglantine, for her part, would become a mother some time in spite of everything which seemed to speak against it, and would know exactly how much of herself was in her child, and what was not. Eglantine did not know this kind of fear, in her there was another fear, the fear of covetousness, the great fear that lies at the back of all desire.

And so it could sometimes come about that when Eglantine, seizing Ellen's hand, looked at her with this covetous fear in her eyes, Ellen, only to make this terrible eye of fear close up, at last would bury her mouth in Eglantine's trembling lips. . . . .

RUDOLF KASSNER.

Translated from the German by HEDVIG KURANDA.

THREE SONGS FROM *THE BRIDGE*

SOUTHERN CROSS

I WANTED you, nameless Woman of the South,
No wraith, but utterly—as still more alone
The Southern Cross takes night
And lifts her girdles from her, one by one
Close, cool,
high from the smoking lice
Of slower heavens,
vaporous scars!

Eve! Magdalene!
or Mary, you?

Whatever call—falls vainly on the wave.
O simian Venus, homeless Eve,
Unwedded, stumbling gardenless to grieve
Windswept guitars on lonely decks forever;
Finally to answer all within one grave!

And this long wake of phosphor,
viridescent
Furrow of all our travel—trailed derision!
Eyes crumble at its kiss. Its long-drawn spell
Incites a yell. Slid on that backward vision
The mind is churned to spittle, whispering hell.

I wanted you . . . The embers of the Cross
Climbed by aslant and huddling aromatically.
It is blood to remember; it is fire
To stammer back . . . It is
God—your namelessness. And the wash—

All night the water combed you with black
Insolence. You crept out simmering, accomplished.
Water rattled that stinging coil,—your
Rehearsed hair—docile, alas, from many arms.
Yes, Eve—wraith of my unloved seed!

The Cross, a phantom, buckled—dropped below the dawn.
Light drowned the lithic trillions of your spawn.

NATIONAL WINTER GARDEN

Outspoken buttocks in pink beads
Invite the necessary cloudy clinch
Of bandy eyes . . . No extra mufflings here:
The world's one flagrant, sweating cinch.

And while legs waken salads in the brain
You pick your blonde out neatly through the smoke.
Always you wait for someone else though, always—
(Then rush the nearest exit through the smoke)

Always and last, before the final ring
When all the fireworks blare, begins
A tom-tom scrimmage with a somewhere violin,
Some cheapest echo of them all begins.

And shall we call her whiter than the snow?
Sprayed first with ruby, then with emerald sheen—
Least tearful and least glad (who knows her smile?)
A caught slide shows her sandstone grey between.

Her eyes exist in swivellings of her teats,
Pearls whip her hips, a drench of whirling strands.
Her silly snake-rings begin to mount, surmount
Each other—turquoise fakes on tinselled hands.

We wait that writhing pool, her pearls collapsed,
—All but her belly buried in the floor;
And the lewd trounce of a final muted beat!
We flee the spasm through another door . . .

Yet, to the empty trapeze of your flesh,
Astarte, each comes back to die alone.
Then you, the burlesque of our lust—and faith,
Lug us back lifeward—bone by infant bone.

VIRGINIA

O rain at seven,
Pay-check at eleven—
Keep smiling the boss away,
Mary (what are you going to do?)
Gone seven—gone eleven,
And I'm still waiting you—

O blue-eyed Mary with the claret scarf,
Saturday Mary, mine!

It's high carillon
From the popcorn bells!
Pigeons by the million—
And Spring in Prince Street
By figs on the green
Half oyster shells!

O Mary, leaning from the high wheat tower,
Let down your golden hair!

High in the noon of May
On cornices of daffodils
The slender violets stray.
Crap-shooting gangs in Bleecker reign,
Peonies with pony manes—
Forget-me-nots in windowpanes:

Out of the way up nickle-dime tower shine,
Cathedral Mary, shine!

HART CRANE.

C. M. DOUGHTY, POETE MALGRE LUI

IT is, probably, always a misfortune when a man of contemplative bent is harried by a desire to instruct others; believes he is called to be a prophet; it is certainly a misfortune when such a man is at the same time born a poet. And, although a poet must be, at bottom, a contemplator, and, under one aspect, his business is that of passing on his conclusions, or reception of the world, to others, I do not think my opening assertion an absurdity. There is all possible difference between the false work of the prophet by intention and the production of the poet, who immediately is concerned with nothing further than the construction of self-contained organisms from the material he has observed, sorted, and adapted. The poet's work may be delighted in for its own sake; and, although its fundamental usefulness may be the extrinsic values (prophetic values) it possesses, its purpose is self-sufficient delight, by way of which alone these values may be exploited by others.

I have begun with these observations, because what I am about in this article is really to say what a pity it is that the man who could write such satisfying lyric lines as:

> "Issued, like lamp, from wild wood of the skies,
> New moon outshines; and cast great forest stems,
> Whose crooked boughs rock on this frozen wind,
> Swart shadows; and weep oft their snowy crests,
> Down on sheer hulver thicket boughs, beneath.
> Caradoc them deems, who now, night-dreamer walks,
> With darkened mood, shafts, harnessed Roman soldiers:
> And wind-gusts, piping loud, blow like an horn!"

should be so obsessed with his call as to labour through the unravelled tangle of his epic conceits concocted of vanished nations,

dead seers and sages, mythological figures, bloody wars, elves, and titans. If we had only his volumes of poetry, which, when they leave "caterfs now marching" and "Ostorius' trains", who "cast a *vallum,* in their midst, in little space, and that behind their backs", and such delightfully ludicrous passages as that concerning Vellocatus, who :

> ". . . . lived with Cartismandua, in secret wonne;
> In luxury, until, then changed her woman's mind;
> She, instead of wont love-potion, in his drink,
> Strewed venim privily; whence he swelled and died.
> Yet sith repenting, by tremendous spells,
> She gods constrained to loose her love from death",

pass, in would-be twentieth century, to :

> "Soon after, at new turning of the road;
> We found one set, to mend his motor-car. .
> . . . . . .
> The craftsman, looking it over, spied the fault;
> And raught a stone, for hammer in his fist;
> He deftly it gan to handle and to smite",

C. M. Doughty would in all likelihood already long have passed to oblivion.

It was certain qualities in his untidy, obscure, and cumbersome record of a remarkable sojourn in an exotic country that justly won him admiring recognition. Coming thus into the world of immortality on a false passport which the officials at the frontier of that world but partly understood, he may be said to have smuggled his poetry in with him. The lookers-on at this world, with the eclipse glasses that they habitually use, have not been quite clear what should be done with it; but it is time to recognize that what Doughty, on his extraordinary passport, smuggled in contained some of the most beautiful lines in the English language, and hints of one of the underlying principles of form in short lyrical construction.

The keys to it all can be found in "Arabia Deserta". It would not be seemly of me to dwell at length on the characteristics of prose, when I am concerned, as a practising technician, with verse; but I cannot go forward without suggesting that it would be blindness, deafness, and a total absence of an ear for

our language, to suggest that Doughty was able to write good prose. The barbaric and magnificent stuff of which "Arabia Deserta" is made owes the beauties which, in spite of the crudities and absurd mannerisms of which it is full, it possesses, not in the least to its manner, but entirely to its stuff, and to the images that stuff calls forth. Professor Fairley, in his recent work of adoration,* touches cooler truth when, (lauding, if I remember rightly, the five volumes of "The Dawn in Britain"), he emphasizes the preponderance of concrete words in Doughty. If Doughty had been small enough a man to dwell only on the filmable aspects of Arabia, if the bulk of the book had been like :

> "We came up between rough walling, built of basalt stones, and rotten palm-stocks, and clots of black clay.—How strange are these dank Kheybar valleys in the waterless Arabia!"

it would perhaps be the practice to say of him that he wrote as a painter, apprehending vividly the physical body of the world around him. Because he saw more; and was, in fact, what, in writing, really corresponds to the painter—because he put down as concrete elements in a picture *for both eyes and brain,* not only "that rugged lowland country, frying in the sun", but also "the sour Waháby fanaticism" which "has in these days cruddled the hearts of the nomads"—his readers have not perhaps realized that his book is a series of pictures, but pictures that are composite of both physical and mental aspects, both presented concretely, of the country he describes. The prose is admirable not for what it is, since it is often atrocious; but for what it does, which is generally remarkable. I am not, I think, alone in preferring, often, to listen to a singer, than to a voice, which, produced and trained, is simulating singing; and this is not a suggestion that the polish of technique is baneful, but that, among, say, technically polished singers, many more than should be are commonly mistaken for real singers; whereas, among the unskilled, when we have the most obvious crudities to repel us, we may,

* *Charles M. Doughty. By Barker Fairley. Jonathan Cape 1927, 7/- net.*

even being less critically alert, be more sure that, if we are satisfied, what satisfies us is really good.

The imperfections, then, of Doughty's prose are not to be regretted, as far as they are not imperfections proper, but qualities arising from his matter. Enthusiasts will always, being more emotional than analytical, seize on this sort of excuse (which touches so near on that skill which, so we are sometimes given to understand, comes only by inspiration), though Professor Fairley has now provided, by his innocuous exaggeration, a sort of vaccine for the particular case of Doughty; but this is here no matter of mine, as I am concerned with the verse.

It was, though, necessary to refer to the prose because, owing to the external interest of the journey described, the startling nature of the material, and the underlying unity of interest, the reader can bear patiently, not only the crudities and mannerisms of style, but even the confusion in which the material is presented, the total absence of form. For that matter, one does not in any case expect, in a travel book, much form, beyond a commencement with departure, a lucidity as to geographical movement (which Doughty muddles), and a conclusion with return home or arrival at destination. It is different with a poem, even if this be epic. Circumstances out of the control of an author determine his geographical movements, but all that a poem contains is determined alone by the author's pleasure, or his ability.

Thus it is that, in Doughty's verse, the unwieldiness of the epic mould he adopted, the incongruousness of the material he poured into that mould, the horrible lack of a form which might have brought some clarity into the chaos, combine with the linguistic mannerisms he cultivated, but never realized the exaggerated absurdity of, to make it more dead than the prophetic books of Blake, into which Mr. Damon so ingeniously and valiantly endeavoured to explain if not sense, at least system. Even Professor Fairley, candidate for the high-priestship of a Doughty cult, who sees a certain order in "The Dawn in Britain," the most cumbersome work of all, and has provided a really lucid synopsis of the fable, is driven to question the artistic

justification of such an important chunk as the first Brennus section, and to deplore the undigested erudite accompaniment to the Christian voyage to Britain. In any case, much of his praise remains, in spite of his evident intention, but veiled condemnation; as, for example, his praise of Doughty's craftsmanship, by which "If two related incidents in the narrative are widely separated in time, Doughty, as far as possible, separates them in the poem and gives the reader no choice but to wait". This failure of Doughty's to construct his poem, and create time interval in the narrative by means of illusion, sadly recalls Signor Marinetti, with his:

> ". . . . arco teso confiare il suo ventre APRIIIIIRSI AAAAAHI PATAPUMPATATRAACK. . . "

sort of thing.

We have, then, long works with an epic background. I suppose "The Dawn in Britain" (which I have not by me to examine), contains about 40,000 lines, and the work in general bears, in all formal respects, a close resemblance to Doughty's typical character, the curious Mansoul, who enters the world described by his inventor as "the uncouth appearance of Huge Wight". These uncouth works are devoid of form, marred by an artificial language with vile mannerisms, and saturated with humourless messianistic earnestness directed towards the advocacy, apparently, of some moral purpose which, however, is never clearly defined.

Thus honestly described, Doughty's poetry sounds forbidding. It is forbidding. But yet the man is a poet who may prove to have contributed more in the last century to English poetry than any other, with the two exceptions of Gerard Hopkins and Mr. Kipling; he is a poet who is, at present, read for his prose, but whose prose is a thing of poverty against his verse.

What then, have we left that his verse contains (since we must cancel so much for impossible subjects and formless treatment and execrable language) by which to make so extravagant a claim? There are two elements; for I shall leave aside consideration of the vastness of his conceptions, in the first place

because treatment of this is bound up with treatment of his weak power over general form, and there is no space to deal with that here; and in the second place because I am concerned with the more strictly technical side of his verse. For both these elements we may find keys, as I have said, in "Arabia Deserta"; on the first I have already touched; the second, and more important, develops from it.

The poet complete, as I see him, records, or expresses, some digested portion of his experience in language which, besides being cast in more or less regular rhythmic groups, the length of which is limited by the speaking power of one breath, constitutes in itself, taken as a whole, an organic unit. Since our apprehension of the world around us is concrete (plainly speaking only our musings about the concrete things can be abstract), whether it be concrete apprehension of trees or of sorrow, the poet gains in power by the concreteness of the elements with which he presents a particular digested portion of experience. The power to construct concrete imagery which makes "Arabia Deserta" a remarkable book, and leads uncritical admirers of it to imagine it to be written in wonderful prose, is evident in all of Doughty's verse. Where he is unable to make clear to us a vision, he is able to make vivid the various elements in it. When we read:

> "Gan, as enforcedly, then my steps to pace;
> Towards mountain-strait, where Mansoul lately passed:
> Walled up to skies, where broods eternal Night,
> O'er mournful steeps. Swart-leaved woodshaw I pass;
> Neath crumpled boughs, aye dripping baleful mist!
> On sleep-compelling cankerworts beneath,
> Black héllebore and rank-smelling déadly dwale
> And bryony, and other more, I know not well:
> The Furies' garden-knots; whose snaky entrailed
> Locks, wrapped about by feeble knees and feet."

we wonder, even if we are following carefully, exactly what the man's purpose is; but in this hazy vision such lines as "my steps to pace towards mountain-strait, . . . walled up to skies, where broods eternal Night, o'er mournful steeps", give a strikingly definite picture to our jaded minds.

Bright lines, however, and isolated vivid flashes, with even extravagant metaphor harmoniously mastered, as :

> "Like to some swart vast fowl, how silent Night,
> (As Day she covered, with her dusky wings),
> Broods o'er dim sullen round, of earth and woods" !

alone do not make a poet. We are still, if this is all, but able to pick out the promising (however marvellous, still but promising) lines in a novice's ramblings; some sort of anthology of *Lines and Phrases of C. M. Doughty, compiled in one volume, with every intention to completeness, by Mr. Benefactor,* is an impossible thing. Without any trace of form, the mere fine lines would be nearly worthless. In Doughty, however, this is, in spite of the formlessness of the whole, evidence of a certain very keen sense of most concise form; not the architectural form, however, necessary for epic, but, strangely enough, form for short lyric compositions. The key, as I have already said, is to be found in "Arabia Deserta". It is, in its clearest form in that book, in a conspicuous place; so much so that Professor Fairley begins a chapter by quoting and discussing it—it is the first paragraph of "Arabia Deserta", of which Professor Fairley says, "Here we have an instance of what Doughty might have done, if he had chosen, in ornate and invented prose. Its elaborate structure—so distinct from what is to follow—shows that it was not written casually. It is like a small work in itself, executed in a vein which Doughty never returned to".

Professor Fairley so loves, apparently, shapelessness (or what, I believe, is called Gothic—or sometimes English—or even, maybe, nowadays, Nordic—*gorgeous untrammelled imagination,* which abhors clarity), that he finds this passage, in its classically simple structure (to which I shall revert), *ornate, invented,* and *elaborate*; and, as it is exactly in the form of this passage (repeated innumerable times through both "Arabia Deserta" and his verse) that Doughty's art has a message for other craftsmen, it is most misleading of him to say that it was a vein never returned to. Sound understanding has, however, in spite of himself, guided him when he states that "it is like a small work in itself". In fact, supposing we read but this, in some anthology,

and were told it was a prose translation "from the Chinese", what a satisfactory poem, in spite of the loss of verse, should we not find it, evoking, by association, many a profitable train of thought.

> "A new voice hailed me of an old friend when, first returned from the Peninsula, I paced again in that long street of Damascus which is called Straight; and suddenly taking me wondering by the hand "Tell me (said he), since thou art here again in the peace and assurance of Ullah, and whilst we walk, as in former years, towards the new blossoming orchards, full of the sweet spring as the garden of God, what moved thee, or how couldst thou take such journeys into the fanatic Arabia?"

We must see in what the elaborate structure of this passage consists.

Music will provide us with a guide to understanding; not because music contains any sort of mystic element, and certainly not because it lies nearer to the ultimate than other arts, but because it is the art, relying on development in time, in which the material used is most devoid of exterior interest. In music the machinery from which we derive our pleasure is laid bare. Associations, by memory of previous audition or of other melodies, introduce an incalculable element of great importance in analysis of even the simplest musical unit—a bare melody; but, apart from these (and it is to be supposed that a hypothetical subject who had never heard music and was confronted by a melody played, say, on the flute, or other instrument, poor in "human"-like, confusing, overtones, would derive, when he had grown accustomed to it, a certain pleasure from it) there is no reason why the principal cause of pleasure in music should not be expressed in conventional symbols.

We derive the pleasure, do we not, from being thwarted in expectation of relief which we should obtain, either by exact repetition of what we have already heard, or by the converse answering phrase, with its return to the resting note of the melody (roughly, in modern parlance, the key-note). We are thwarted, and yet (because all pleasure-giving media based on development in time, and of a soporific nature—as the film melodrama, the

average novel, and most musical works—in which we see most clearly the general structure of all works of art—are provided with a happy ending) we are confident that ultimately we shall be allowed to reach what we have mistakenly expected too early, but which we shall enjoy the more for the additional relief it will bring, after our time of anxiety.

This demand for repetition in the second part of a musical entity, or for an answer within the fractional phrases which shall arise from what went before, lies, in analagous form, at the bottom of verse. To this demand we owe (to give two obvious outstanding examples), in the first place, rhymed stanzas, in which, if they are well constructed, we delight not only in the repetition of a set of sounds, but also even in a piquant variation of them; and, at the same time, in the new word, which, linked to the same rhyme, is illuminated by its position, and, therefore, flashes on us, showing brightly all its significance and associations; and, in the second place, such a form as blank verse where our delight is in the varying content of syllabically identical lines; or in crude or subtle, but in either case potentially delightful, unexpected departure from the syllabic or metric framework of the whole.

Doughty satisfied this demand in another way. Let us remember the manner of musical compositions to hold up a resolution, or a transition, from its simplest logical course, by exasperating and pleasure-giving interpolations of various kind—occasionally of matter which might even be considered of prime importance; and let us turn to that "elaborate structure" of the opening of "Arabia Deserta". Lengthy preparation has been necessary to arrive at a simple thing.

Let us be at it. What (in the light of the purpose of Doughty in the book) is the essential of this paragraph? Professor Fairley remarks that "Arabia Deserta", "with a peculiar appropriateness", "reflects what must have been to some extent Doughty's recollection of himself". He emphasizes, with good judgment, the "'psychological' fascination" of what is otherwise ostensibly a record of a journey. Here we have indications; the essential of the opening paragraph of the book is that it sums up the reason

for the whole book—"A new voice hailed me [of an old friend]—how couldst thou take such journeys into the fanatic Arabia"?—the book being the answer. Here we have disclosed for us the secret of the "ornate structure" which so puzzled Professor Fairley, who, with all his sensitive insight into content, is lost in matters of manner and form. What he rightly senses as "like a small work in itself" is a simple theme, developed by suspension of the downward curve of the arc of rhythm—the answering phrase. The movement of thought, in a long sentence which appeared "ornate", is actually most direct and simple. Like a lyric poem, the passage contains one subject. Because the developed suspension is beautifully done, the passage stands by itself. It is not merely *like* a small work in itself, it *is* a small work in itself. By a finality purely independent of the meaning of the content, without dependence even on the suggestiveness of the "ornate" material, it satisfies. It is a small, but unhampered, window on to the world. Like a stanza of Donne (who also was particularly skilled in making a rhythmic unit of words move to a resolution but at the very end) it clicks.

That is the charm, that the message, of Doughty's verse. Throughout the cumbersome epics he wished to make himself write, he constantly, by simple weakening of his powers of repression, fell from describing the battles of caterfs and wights and titans to realizing the ideal which really animated him; and which (we may presume, through puritan parental and youthful influence) he misinterpreted so ludicrously—the ideal of finding, in verse, through his marvellous power over concrete imagery, expression of green England together with his vision of England's past and the perspective, in it all, with which he saw man.

Such passages as:

> "I a watering see in gazing further forth,
> From the pitched tents; of their faint bleating flocks:
> Come in, gainst midday heat, from sun-sered coast,
> And the lean herb; gathered to the wells' mouths."

and:

> "Where sounds no living voice; nor shaketh leaf,
> Nor blade, of any green thing, there is seen"

are, not merely memories of Arabia, but contrasting backgrounds to his

> "Bowers of roses wild, with cinnamon smell,
> Whose long arms, ment with gentle eglantine",

just as life in Arabia was a contrasting background to the life in England. Doughty is tossed between bare rocks and green groves, but the green groves predominate. It is remarkable that, with Arabia, as it must have been, so much on his mind, Doughty was able to resist the temptation to which a later poet (who appears peculiarly to have profited by Doughty's work) has succumbed; and revel in the barren wastes of rock he had so closely seen. But to what (as this is intended to be a technical article) does the form of expression to which Doughty, in spite of himself, arrived then amount?

It amounts to nothing else than the pure verse form a poet in another tongue had worked towards before him. I think of Mallarmé; the crown of whose labours was the poem which might be accounted the model for Doughty's form—*Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hazard.* Perhaps few readers are sufficiently familiar with this. It is apparently the fashion to insist that the niceties of French verse are inaccessible to us English, and *"Un Coup de Dés"* is the most obscure work in French verse; and, scattered over both sides of the enormous pages on which it is printed, in several different sizes of type, it looks extravagant. And extravagant it is, not, however, because of this arrangement; rather, the arrangement is the symptom of the extravagancy, which is its being the extreme formal expression of a possible verse form. The poem is well worth a fortnight's close study.

The main theme, *un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hazard,* runs through the poem from beginning to end in the largest type; shouted in a clarion voice, let us say; and, as it goes, commentary (already prepared on the complete statement) embroiders it, commentary the commentary, and other commentary that commentary, each in smaller type, diminishing voices, down to a fragile whisper. It is the absurdly impractical realization of an ideal.

"Issued, like lamp, from wild wood of the skies,
New moon outshines. . .".

Doughty writes (I have quoted the whole passage at the beginning of this article) and were we given this alone, with no context, "What a painter in words", we should cry; a canvas on which human terror as well as the movement of nature has been caught, motionless, but in full speed of change. As I see it, he splits the basic theme into its two halves thus: "Issued, like lamp, from wild wood of the skies, new moon outshines . . . . . and windgusts, piping loud, blow like an horn!" Caradoc, a mere puny, temporary, figure, fearing the Romans, seeing them in the tree-shapes (the Romans we now know to have been temporary too), comes in as the ornament and development by which suspension of concluding what calls for conclusion, "new moon outshines . . ." is attained. If we analyse farther, a secondary, the human, theme, becomes clear, and is treated in the same way—the suspending material being the ornament proper. The secondary theme is: "Cast stems swart shadows . . . . . Caradoc deems harnessed Roman soldiers".

This is a simple case. I pass to a more elaborate one. It is:

"Upon the morrow, Cæsar wends, with pomp;
To altar of Augustus, twixt the streams.
And, lo, one purpled, by that sacred path,
Him waits, whose forehead girt with golden bend;
But, as murk twilight, be this stranger's looks.
And knew him Claudius, Herod Antipas!
(Was sometime tetrarch of a Roman province:)
Caligula him exiled. Is he that Fox,
Which John beheaded: he whole ward of soldiers,
Spit on God's lowly Jesus; Whom they bruised,
Ah! and buffeted! and Him mocked, with sceptre-reed,
(Him, before world, ALL-RULER!) in his hand;
And diadem of sharp spines, and purple robe!"

We begin with Cæsar, with pomp; to him is at once joined Herod Antipas, purpled, diademed; the development continues, leading us, as we feel, somewhither; yes, it brings us to Jesus, whom they bruised, ah! and buffeted, and him mocked—and how far we are suddenly from Cæsar, walking at dusk, in pomp, in a sacred grove, by streams! How far from the resolution

of ending! Then we are back again, by way of the conception of ruling, to Jesus, in diadem of sharp spines, and purple robe! From purple robe to purple robe; from peace, through discord, to another, contrasting, peace; a remarkable example of the use of this form.

One of the most concise and, perhaps, most beautiful examples of resolution in contrast is the following:—

> "When shines new sun, in heaven, with cheerful face;
> And lavrock mounts, from battle-bruiséd grass,
> Of Colne; and comes already crow, of cock,
> To Claudius' ears, and clarions sound the watch:
> He, from his surfeit, trembling wakes and pale".

Here, against the background of Doughty's English lavrock, that mounts beneath the morning sun, we see Claudius rise, trembling and pale.

If we carry the analysis farther still, the rigid form stands out but the clearer. Because of the keen sense he possessed of the strictly iambic nature of the sense-phrase in English (by which I mean that our speech groups, rhythmically, in such sections that the firm accent falls on the final word, which is, by meaning, at the same time, the most important), we may find the thread of Doughty's thought in a series of accented words; for the emphasis, or proper accentual placing, of which the annoying inversions are but the contrivances of a man who was either not skilled enough in, or too careless of, technical detail to avoid them. Taking this lyric, "When shines new sun . . .", and remembering that his blank verse, if otherwise shapeless, practically always contains one cæsura, it is possible to lay the succession of images bare. "Sun," says Doughty, "cheerful face"; "mounts" (lavrock, symbol of gaiety for him, too,) "from . . . . grass"; then "crow" of "cock", falling on "Claudius' ears", which leads us to the parallel of "clarions", whereupon, "he", with sudden contrast, "trembling wakes and pale". It is a perfect lyric poem, a self-contained vision of a sector of human activity; man is seen, in a typical situation, on the background of nature.

In this we touch on Doughty's greatness as a poet who illus-

trated the high function of serious lyric poetry; he gives a concise, and pleasing, presentation of a certain group of events as he has observed or imagined, and grouped them in such a way as to draw the general from the particular and illuminate the human on the background of the non-human. If we examine what I would call his lyrics farther we may say more of them; that they have done in small space what he was misguided enough to think his epics could do in unlimited space—they have given us a study of man, against a background of nature, in England, transcending withal the limitations of time throughout English history as he understood it.

A further point to be recorded is that the nature of the form he apparently unconsciously adopted, in that part of his work which has value, imposed on it a marvellously still quality; made his composite pictures longshots; although it is to be suspected that his own recognition of this quality (because he may have mistaken it for epic vision) was a contributory cause (in addition to the fundamental pathological one, his sense of a call) of his narrowly escaping disaster by his propheticism.

His concrete vision was peculiarly fitted for longshots; it is probable, too, that the magnificent expanse of Arabia, in which, one suspects, he was first able to breathe freely, aided him to do his poet's work and see all life impassively, from afar. A lyric which is essentially a single theme (a single statement) is by necessity finite. In Mallarmé, gloating over subdivided hairs among the stuffy odours of a late nineteenth century drawing-room, the form became reduced to one example, and the theme to a paradoxical and enigmatical aphorism, "*un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hazard*": in Doughty, who longed, one imagines, rather to re-weld rocks than to split hairs, the aphoristic quality (the quality of being a definite presentation of an aspect of human life) remained, by reason of the very form; but in him it merely served to give outline to the realities, the living and unliving in concrete pictures, which in him hold the place of Mallarmé's paradox subtleties, so that we are enabled to gloat over a rich hoard of such palpable, ultimate-touching, yet sweetly elusive things as:

"As wont the dewy flowers, at Summer's dawn,
Unfold, with parfume, 'gainst the light divine,
So her dear aspect, entering through his eyes,
With subtle influence, ere might Pudens find
Defence, his heart transmues, sublimes his being.
Then flows the blood, in a delicious tide;
With high aspiring, frail, quick, confuse thought;
As when spread riotous leaves' green multitude,
On some fat ground; which, of few seeds, arise".

ALEC BROWN.

POETS IN AFRICA

(To William Plomer)

FOR grazing innocence a salad
Of lilies in the bud,
For those who dine on words a ballad,
For you and me a name of mud,
A rash of stars upon the sky,
A pox of flowers on the earth—
To such diseases of the eye
Habituated from our birth,

We had no time for make-believe
So early each began
To wear his liver on his sleeve,
To snarl, and be an angry man :
Far in the desert we have been
Where Nature, still to poets kind,
Admits no vegetable green
To soften the determined mind,

But with snarled gold and rumbled blue
Must disinfect the sight
Where once the tender maggots grew
Of faith and beauty and delight.
Each with a blister on his tongue,
Each with a crater in his tooth,
Our nerves are fire : we have been stung
By the tarantulas of truth.

Each like a freezing salamander
Impervious and immune,
No snivelling sentiment shall pander
To our flirtations with the moon,
And though with gay batrachian chirrup
Her poets thrill the swampy reach,
Not with so glutinous a syrup
As moonlight shall we grease our speech.

Our cook, the Sun, in craggy kitchens
Amid the howling waste
Has fried the terrible sour lichens
So dainty to a poet's taste,
Which sovereign remedy is ours
Against the earth's infectious scars,
Its annual eczema of flowers
The pullulation of its stars—

Whose itch corrodes the soft medulla
Of kindlier brains than ours
Wherein attuned to local colour
Each cheap colonial virtue flowers,
Flits like a moth from bloom to blossom
Or to protective markings trusts
In shady corners playing possum
To gratify its private lusts.

The fauna of this mental waste,
They cheer our lonely way
And round our doleful footsteps haste
To skip, to gambol, and to play;
The kite of Mercy sails above
With reeking claws and cry that clangs,
The old grey wolf of Brother-Love
Slinks in our track with yellow fangs.

And it is sweet at times to hear,
Out of the turf we trod,
Hysterical with pain and fear
The blood of Abel screech to god,
Hurled shivering up through vaults immense
Where, whirling round the empty sky,
Green fossils of Omnipotence,
The bones of his Creator fly.

True sons of Africa are we
Though bastardized with culture,
Indigenous and wild and free
As wolf, as pioneer and vulture—
Yea, though for us the vision blearing
No membrane nictitates the light,
Though we are cursed with sense and hearing
And doubly cursed with second sight,

Still doomed that skyward screech to hear
That haunted us in youth,
We shall grow terrible through fear,
We shall grow venomous with truth,
And through these plains where thought meanders
Through sheepish brains in wormy life,
Our lives shall roll like fierce Scamanders
Their red alluvium of strife.

When in the moonlight, red and bloody,
The night has smeared the plain,
We rise from awful nights of study
With coal-red eyes and whirling brain—
Our minds like dark destructive engines
Prepare those catapults and slings
In whose preliminary vengeance
The thunder of the Future sings.

What though we have no walls or bastions
To shield our riddled hearts?—
Arrowed like convicts, twin Sebastians
Each in his uniform of darts,
When in his crimson garb outlandish
The martyr turns a porcupine
Who such fearful spikes can brandish,
Who in more fiendish warpaint shine?

ROY CAMPBELL.

BLACK PERIL

I

A CAR stood outside one of the large white houses in the residential quarter of Dunnsport. It belonged to the doctor, who was making his third visit in twelve hours.

"Calm yourself," he said irritably to the frantic husband of the young woman. "I insist on your behaving calmly. Think of your wife".

"Think of her! I can think of nothing else!"

"She won't recover from the shock unless you control yourself. Listen".

He could hear his wife's voice. She was lying in the next room in a state of delirium.

"I want Charlie!" she was moaning in an unnatural voice.

The door opened, and a nurse came out. Her white clothes were slightly starched, and rustled as she moved. She beckoned to the doctor and they whispered together. The glare of the sun outside was reflected on the white walls of the room. The young man felt wounded by so much whiteness, the white suit of the doctor, the white veil of the nurse, the thought of his wife's white face on the white pillow. In extreme terror he heard again the unnatural sound of her voice, and covered his face with his hands.

"Come now," said the doctor, "she will recover from the shock".

II

In the dark bedroom the raving young woman, Vera Corneliussen, opened her eyes. She saw a view of the town as if

she had been standing on the flat roof of the house. It is a winter's afternoon, she can see the pale cubes and masses of square, modern buildings, the colour of sand and stone, under the faint blue of the sunny sky. Far away down there, their flat walls peppered with windows, they seem of archaic simplicity, awaiting or surviving events, unreal yet too real, like the buildings in a dream. On several pinnacles tiny flags can be seen flying at half-mast, for somebody is dead. On this fine, still, winter afternoon these are the buildings of Egypt, or the ruined cities of Asia.

It is night. She is two years old. They are staying at a farm in the summer. Her sister is dead, and she can hear her mother and her father weeping. The night air is full of the noise of frogs. There is a full moon. Her bath stands under the window and the surface of the water wavers in the moonlight. She is frightened and begins to cry. Suddenly, the moonlight disappears, as if a curtain had been drawn. It is the black nursemaid who has come to see what is the matter. Her hands are hot, her voice is soft, she has a strange, friendly smell.

When the child sits at meals a native man moves noiselessly behind her chair. He wears loose white clothes that smell of soap and flap coolly against his warm, dark skin. When she looks up at his face she can see a rose-brown flush that suffuses his cheeks. The palms of his hands are pink.

At Dunnsport, sitting on the beach, she sees a woman pouring cold tea out of a dark green bottle.

"O, he's devoted to Trixie and Stanley," she is saying. "Just look at him now".

A native man is caressing, with his sensual lips, the feet of her child. He smiles, showing his primitive white teeth.

"I was glad I got rid of that other boy I had. You remember that boy Isaac I had, eh? He was only fourteen, and do you know before he'd been with the kiddies a week they began to come out with the most shocking language. You wouldn't believe the expressions they came out with. I tell you, Mrs. Dawcock, really, my ears was burning. And the habits Trixie and Stanley learnt from that Isaac! I haven't got

them out of them yet. Precocious little monkey he was, that Isaac of mine".

There is a smell of straw. When she was twelve years old Vera Corneliussen was found in the loft with a native boy four years older than herself, and he was nearly flogged to death. Yes, of course, she is on the farm again. "Smiling Morn" is the name of the farm, but she remembers best the afternoons, the Sunday afternoons in winter. The long grass is dry and yellow, there is a low mud-house at the top of the slope above the river, whose bed is almost dry, with flat rocks under the silver-poplar trees which are only just losing their leaves, and in whose shade there is a damp, pungent smell. Somewhere the notes of a concertina are repeating over and over again a monotonous tune which makes her feel her heart could break, her heart could break in sobs, could break out sobbing, sobbing, sobbing.

She is at school. There is a scandal. One of the girls was caught, late at night, returning from the native quarters in her nightgown. Afterwards, she was supposed to have had a child. It was only by chance that Vera hadn't been with her; the girl had suggested that they should go together.

And then, on the coast, she sees the train tunnelling through the feverish brilliance and glossy profusion of the foliage, and afterwards people walking along the line. All the trees are quivering in a hot steam of mist, all listening, all the nerves of trees listening to the funeral tom-toms of the Indians at the compound, all day, all night, quite slow, dead and dull, at intervals, like hammers thudding, tom-toms in the head, thud, tom-toms in the heart, thud. A young man of the Indians was beautiful. They called him the Jewel of Asia.

Tin bungalows in the hot, dry, dirty, loose sand full of bones, tins, papers, sticks, and the droppings of animals. Some towels are hung out to dry on the verandah. Inside, the furniture is yellowish, the food tastes like metal, the conversation is like stale beer. A pimply clerk gets out of the train. He lives next door. His wife, like a bedraggled cockatoo, runs down to meet him.

A tired actress, who travels with a concert party, is stagger-

ing back through the sand after bathing. She is still wearing her bathing-dress (to which some sand is sticking as if it had been thrown there); it fits tightly to her skin, and is wrinkled on her massive legs.

Vera Corneliussen feels herself travelling along the coast. As she goes she sees cape after cape, lagoon after lagoon, and the long horizontal seas combing in wave after wave. Inland, the slender curving bamboos, always waving in the air with gentle unvarying gestures, are like fishing-rods that have waited so long for a catch that they have long since broken into leaf, and yet they continue in every wind to wave with a forlorn, despairing hope. And there are groves of wild bananas everywhere, which on still days are green, but which on windy days are blown back so that they show their silvery undersides, like dead fish floating in a whirlpool, floating belly upwards in mockery of the lashed and straining bamboos.

Inland, there is a venerable old Arab storekeeper whose body is like biscuit-coloured marble. He has a white beard, and wears a coat of purple silk and a skull-cap embroidered with threads of silver tinsel. His son, they say, is on a pilgrimage to Mecca; he has a Zulu concubine; he has few customers; he lies on a couch and spits where he pleases.

After the banana plantation and the mango orchard, there is a small tin house, painted pale blue, from which proceeds domestic smoke with an aromatic smell. It is raining softly, a steam of smoke is everywhere, and she can hear a baby crying. Under the trees with large leaves white and speckled fowls stand huddled together while drops of rain run down their tail-feathers.

Then there is a ploughed field with a path across it, and then a cemetery. In the warm tropical rain stands a group of natives round a shiny wet coffin, and an old German missionary in black is holding up with one hand a large black umbrella with a thick, knobbly handle, while the other supports a hymn-book. There is a nasal sound of singing. A black woman, under a wet white lace parasol, is wearing a pink dress which the rain has already spoilt: it runs with two colours, dark pink and light pink, in streaks.

Vera Corneliussen hears a motor-car, whirring with passionate and ecstatic compression like the respiration of some tremendous bird.

"It's a car! Mind you don't get run over!"

A cold sweat runs down her forehead, and the sun is sinking behind the hill. She can hear again the voice of the woman on the beach at Dunnsport:

"We took some bananas in a paper bag, but they weren't ripe, and a bottle of cold tea. There was a dead fly in it, and she had a shooting pain in her hip. It was very hot that day, and Steve's friend came, him that's been living with us, though time and again I've said to mother: 'Let him go out and work, Steve has to go out and work', but he just stays on. Well, I said to Steve's friend: 'Look here, my lad, don't think I'm going to let you get funny with me'. O yes, I give him something to think about. And all the leaves was turning brown. Yes, trying to get funny, he was".

III

In Dunnsport Vera Corneliussen used sometimes to go and stay with her aunt Judith, a rich old maid, who lived in a house of which all the windows were sealed, and devoted herself to promoting the interests of the Fresh Air Fund. The house had a prickly garden, spiny with pointing palms as poisonous as fish-bones, and in house and garden there was a deafening and hostile silence, and that air of secure and perpetual calm in which storms are born, in which they thunder and breed and die.

When Vera went out of Dunnsport it was nearly always to stay at New Havana, the home of her aunt Judith's brother, and once the centre of the social life of the commercial aristocracy of the coast. But even when she first went there those times had changed. The old white house was rotting in the bush. The road that once led to the old mill, through fields of coffee and arrow-root, was now a swamp, the building itself a roofless ruin. The vacant windows on the land side are full of branches tied and knotted to the walls and to each other by lianas thicker than ropes; the vacant windows on the shore side, like the lids of

sightless eyes, are lighted by an upthrown glare from the dazzling white sand of the shore. From the beach, with savage constancy, comes the sound of the sea-waves pounding and sliding on an expanse of sand. In the tree-tops of the bush clatters the derisive laughter of monkey-birds. So perished the first glory of the Wesleyan conquistadors.

Now their fortunes were in plantations of sugar-cane that cover all the inland hills, which look in the distance like grassy downs. Yet near at hand the cane is tall and dry and sharp, deadly dry to every sense, dry green, dry leaves, papery metal rustling or grating, leaf against leaf, all those jointed stems full of hot, sweet sap.

In the canefields there are long, straight, earthy roads for firebreaks, with the cane higher than her head, on both sides extending out of sight with stiff and rustling monotony. At her feet a snake lies warming itself in the sun. There, in the distance, is an avenue of gum trees of a torrid greyness. Isolated *umdoni* trees, some dead and some leafy, are sticking up out of the cane : and occasional *euphorbias,* dark and fleshy and knotted and rigid, like many arms petrified in a moment of unanimous supplication to an unknown god.

At the new mill, as vast as a cathedral, the cane goes up and up in an endless everlasting elevator. She can hear the crunching sound of greedy and relentless jaws, and out runs the sap in astonishing quantities, as bright as vitriol and with the profusion of water. At the mill there are men running up and down steel staircases, men with red faces, men with brown bodies running along galleries, black men watching steaming vats with fumes of sulphur hovering over their surfaces, men pushing trucks, men feeding furnaces, men obeying machinery, machines obeying men, the inhabitants of a vast and noisy universe of sweat.

IV

It was at New Havana House that she first met George Corneliussen; it was there that she got engaged to him; it was there that they spent their honeymoon. This later house, which

already has an air of slightly faded prosperity, is only thirty years old, and yet is completely hidden by the garden planted after it was built. It is at once forbidding and inviting, in a dark and ordered wilderness of firs and palms and eucalyptuses and flowering shrubs, and groves and groves of orange trees weighed down by masses of ripening fruit that falls and rots with a rich and morbid odour in the damp shade, under firmaments and firmaments of hanging oranges. The house seems to be in a cave of permanent shadow, the sun is shining in some other world.

There is a dance. People are coming out from Dunnsport. It is dusk. She can see quiet and luxurious motor-cars following one another up the approach, with sombre regularity, like deadly thoughts succeeding one another in an unconscious brain. In the middle of the dance she is sitting out with George. He is smoking a cigarette. The trees are swaying in a wash of moonlight. A native servant comes to them with a tray and glasses.

"Here you!" It is the voice of George. "What's your name? What? Charlie, you say?"

She can see the moonlight on his teeth and on the whites of his eyes.

She is going with George to the mill. It is just before they are married. The clerk in the office is rather sallow. He goes out of the room. She asks George:

"Is he white or coloured?"

"Hush, he's what they call a Coast European".

Just at that minute the man comes in again: he must have heard what they were saying.

"After all," she says afterwards to George, "I suppose it isn't a sin to be coloured".

"But it's a sin to look coloured," he says in his pleasant voice. He is so kind and amiable, almost a boy, and he looks so delightful on a pony, his shirt open at the neck. He rides so well, and plays the gramophone so nicely.

"Quite enough people are touched with the tar-brush," he says; "we don't want any more. Just think, for instance, there's

another of these Coast Europeans, also working in the mill, who can either go and have a drink in the European bar or in the Indian bar as he pleases. He's white enough for one, and dark enough for the other".

"Dark enough, dark enough," she repeats the words to herself.

It is the morning after her wedding-day. She is the first to wake. She is surprised to see that George's hair, always so smooth, so neatly parted, is all ruffled on the pillow. George, with his hair ruffled! It makes her laugh, but although the whole bed shakes with her laughing George does not wake up. She can hear the siren at the mill. It is seven o'clock.

After six months they are again staying at New Havana. She is always awake when the siren sounds at the mill. She is always the first down to breakfast. The servant Charlie waits on her at the table. He is taller and broader than George, and more graceful in his movements. His voice is deeper and more harmonious, his temper is better, he evidently has more character. Besides, he is magnetic. One morning she touches his hand as if by accident. He has an electric skin.

V

She has been married two years. There is no child. The man Charlie has left New Havana and is working for her in Dunnsport. George is away. She has quarrelled with him for being irreproachable. She is satisfied that it is a good reason for a quarrel. George has gone away for the week-end to play golf. He tried to pretend that he was going to a woman, but he knew that she knew his pretence. He hadn't the energy to look for one.

"You are content to leave me alone in the house?" she had asked him in the hall, as a servant was carrying his bag of golf-clubs out to the car.

"You aren't obliged to stay here. You can go to a hotel".

At night, when she was in her bedroom, she rang the bell. There was only one servant in the house that night. She had arranged it. Charlie is standing in the doorway.

It is seven o'clock; she can hear a siren. It is afternoon, the light of the sun is pale. It is before dawn; there is lightning in the sky and frost on the ground.

George Corneliussen takes his hands away from his eyes. It is midday. There is a cry in the bedroom. He opens the door. Vera has twisted her body out of the bed. Her head is hanging downwards, so that her earrings are hanging upside down. The nurse runs forward, the husband runs forward, but the woman is dead.

Frightful Outrage in Town, Society Woman Victim Dies of Shock, said the posters the next morning.

"What a shocking case," people said, opening their newspapers on trams, trains, and breakfast tables.

"Yes, these black brutes are all alike".

"Have they caught him?"

"He'll be hung".

"He ought to be lynched".

"I remember once——"

"I must really buy you a revolver". Everywhere the same remarks were to be heard, but in an hour the outrage would be forgotten, and the wind would blow one of the posters into the gutter, where a European peanut-seller, by shifting his feet, would, without knowing, partly obliterate the printed words.

William Plomer.

MEDITATIONS IN A ZOO

THE OWL

OH, those eyes, those eyes—
There is a lamp that burns inward only.
Owl, you are a virgin,
Even though you have a nest in the elm tree
And four little ones
Who gape with naked mouths in the darkness,
Asking a bloody feast.

I saw a baby gazing at me,
Appropriating me
To its own blank understanding,
And I thought it was whole.

I saw a madman,
His sly regard using the world for his design.

I saw a woman in a church,
Looking through death
To find the god she needed.

But when I was instructed by these people,
I had not yet beheld you, Owl—
Not rightly.

I had not taken account of your solemnity,
While you sit,
Still under your umbrella of speckled feathers,

As a man will sit when he is caught in a rainstorm.
I had not interested myself in the Roman dignity
Of your profile,
Your beak pressed to your throat
In immovable orthodoxy.
What an attitude!
But, lest I jibe,
And think your self-assurance merely complacent,
You shift one of those silk curtains
That are eyelids,
Sheltering the mystery,
And the well of night,
In the centre of the glassy furnace,
Displays the velvet flame of the demon,
And the spell that makes you Diana's.
Then, in very defiance of the day,
That has fallen upon you like a blow, stupidly,
You cry—
Utter the grey sound made at a dawn in Limbo.
I shall suspect, hereafter, that you are a poet,
Neither your friends, nor the sufferings of your family,
Nor your victims,
Important to you.

WHITE PEACOCKS

Pompes funèbres
Should be written over the gateway
Of the fowl enclosure.
Over the roosts, flame the crests,
The white torches.
Hecate stands in the shadow.
If an evil goddess could spin lace for the dead,
Of that would be these flamboyant tails.
A peacock flutters.
It struts.
The demi-oriflamme clouds all the barnyard

With mystery.
Six white peacocks ride at midnight on the shoulders of the
hearse.

The peacock's scrawny throat is as withered as leprosy.
The peacock's little eye,
In the painted, feathered head of a bald Pierrot,
Flashes a mindless arrogance.
The fold of its beak is meager,
Like the mouth of a woman who has grudged the world all,
And grudges,
Even now,
The violence of her disappointment—
Her only passion.
The peacock's little feet disdain the earth timidly.
But from the stooping, rounded back,
From the defiant last good-grooming of plumage,
Springs the ornament of renunciation,
The blenched, regal, last garment:
As if the trees of Paradise had shed,
One by one,
Their still immaculate fronds,
Covering,
As with an offering,
The starved body that plucks at grain;
And the palm trees of Paradise
Had laid shadows of silver,
And forever,
Upon the trailing avalanche.
If you will be silent, my peacock,
You and your hen who is a lesser likeness,
Then we may know death beautiful.

Evelyn Scott.

SCRUTINIES

(vii) H. G. Wells

MR. WELLS has written a great many books on a great many subjects, subjects for the most part of the first importance to civilized man. A list of his works to date is commonly printed before the title page of each new addition to the tale, and to a prospective reader, unacquainted with their contents and with the cultural peculiarities of our era, this astonishing array of titles promises nothing less than the encyclopædic life work of a creative and philosophic mind of the first order. To select the more important of his activities, Mr. Wells, the list informs us, besides a great quantity of fiction, has produced sociological, educational, philosophical, theological, historical, and prophetic works. Since it is impossible in a short essay to deal with these in turn, it will be more convenient and useful to commence with Mr. Wells' fiction, for which he is most widely and deservedly known; in which his more specifically creative talent is exercised; and in which we may expect the fruit of a comprehensive mental activity, its quality and its significance, to be presented in its most conclusive and valuable form, related to and interpreting an organized conception of human life.

Mr. Wells' first love was science, which also supplied the stimulus for his earliest imaginative work. It seems clear, indeed, from the start that it was not the pursuit of knowledge that primarily attracted him, but the dramatic possibilities offered by science and the scientist to a romantic journalist, whose view of the laboratory only differed from that of the man in the street in the possession of a somewhat more specialized knowledge, and of

an exceedingly vivid and fluent imagination of an adolescent type. It was, in fact, like the man in the street's, a view, which is how an object looks from outside; and Mr. Wells' imagination was affected by this view in two ways. The naïve delight in the practical achievements of science that distinguishes the savage and the adolescent European became for Mr. Wells a permanent obsession. The conditions of scientific work and the disinterested labour of the scientist provided for his awakening religious instincts the moral ideal unattainable by self and the object of worship they required. Since the love of truth, in short, was not sufficient to keep Mr. Wells at the laboratory bench (where, as he believes, truth is to be found), undivided reverence for the love of truth was the least he could profess instead. So genuinely a religious procedure deserved, and attained, success; the demands of truth satisfactorily complied with, Mr. Wells was free "to sweep in with wide strokes the canvases designed to carry millions upwards and onwards", in the words (I quote from memory) of an eminent economist in a recent article on *The World of William Clissold.*

But, before tracing the development of Mr. Wells' scientific religion, the fruits of his practical interest in science deserve mention. He was the first to exploit its journalistic possibilities, and a stream of spirited and entertaining short stories, fantasies, and novels, based on some newly-acquired piece of biological or psychological knowledge or recent scientific speculation, appeared and delighted the public, who felt that a fairy story with a scientific explanation might come true. At the same time, however, Mr. Wells himself appeared in print, a Mr. Wells very similar in physical appearance to the Mr. Wells we know; a Mr. Wells who has retained, indeed, his physical likeness to his creator, with whom he has grown old; and with whom we are familiar under the names of Mr. Lewisham, Mr. Polly, Kipps, Mr. Ponderevo, Mr. Preemby, and many others. These creations of Mr. Wells' genuine and vivacious comic talent, or, more accurately, since Mr. Wells can create only himself, these variations on a central comic perception, are well enough known to need no description. Mr. Wells' humour and comic sense owe a great

deal to Dickens, but the figure of his invention is essentially his own. It is a small scale figure, and its implications are not profound, but, as the begetter of an authentic comic creation, which is to be found in none of the pages of his contemporaries, Mr. Wells leaves us no option but to consider him as an artist. Mr. Wells, as Plato, has not a high opinion of this order of creative imagination and, as a complement to the Republic of the future, has written a short history of the past of a world in which art and literature are non-existent, with the exception of some able paleolithic drawings and neolithic pottery of the Periclean age itself, and of the works of an artist of considerably later date, Leonardo da Vinci, who foresaw the steamship and aeroplane. In these circumstances it will be interesting to see how Mr. Wells puts on the New Man, and sublimates the artist in the interest of his religion, which is the religion of science, of the subjection of the universe to man by hard, clear, remorseless thinking, in the words of Mr. Wells, or, to put it more simply, by the capacity to discover and adhere to the truth.

Leaving aside his scientific romances, Mr. Wells exploited the discovery of himself as a comic figure in several books of minor but authentic value, of which *Mr. Polly* is, perhaps, the best. Mr. Wells' religion, beyond a vague socialism, had not yet taken shape; and in common with other works of talent, these owe their value to the instinctive and consistent fidelity of their author to what we may call artistic truth, to distinguish it from the scientific truth to which he was shortly to transfer his adherence. *Tono Bungay* marks the first step in his regeneration; and, appropriately enough, the old man and new man, struggling in Mr. Wells' breast, issue forth in uncle and nephew, Edward Ponderevo and George: the one destined to a flare of creative ecstasy and an ignominious end; the other, freeing himself with difficulty from the old man's toils, to emerge as the first incarnation of Mr. Wells' religion, to herald the salvation of man by science through the invention of starker and speedier destroyers, and, incidentally, triumphing over his lowly birth, to love and lose a lady of high degree. Since this novel is the testament of Mr. Wells' conversion, and contains in uncle the gist of what

he had written, in nephew the gist of what he was to write, it is worth some consideration. Mr. Wells' readers will recall how the rising tide of Tono Bungay floats Uncle Ponderevo on the sole plank of a talent for publicity from a small chemist's shop to a fantastic affluence that finally turns his head and involves him in forgery and disaster. Besides containing many admirable comic scenes, the whole forms a spirited extravaganza, based on a substantial and accurate criticism of life, until we reach Mr. Ponderevo's downfall; which might, indeed, have occurred, but since a satirist's business is with the typical, is a regrettable lapse into convention. I am unacquainted with the ingredients or the history of Beecham's pills, but it seems to be the rule that, if bankruptcy is to supervene at all in such successful affairs, it is left to the next generation to incur it. However, let us leave Uncle Ponderevo, who represents life as Mr. Wells sees it, and turn to George Ponderevo, the spokesman of life as Mr. Wells would like it to be. George's reflections at the close of the volume are worth quoting at length, as an early summary of Mr. Wells' religious faith, the substance of which, with admirable and unrecognized consistency, he has repeated but not improved upon in every succeeding book. So characteristic are they in fact that George's concluding words may be found by the incredulous reader printed, presumably with Mr. Wells' consent, opposite the title-page of each volume of his collected works; and shorn to the simplicity of Greek they are echoed in the motto to William Clissold: "We are all things that make and pass, striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea", concludes George; *panta rei* concludes William.

George is in a destroyer of his own invention, leaving London in the evening for a trial run in the North Sea:—

> "Through it [the unorganized confusion of the docks] we dodged and drove, eager for the high seas. . . . . The tall slow ships are all wrought of wet gold as one goes frothing by. They stand out bound on strange missions of life and death, to the killing of men in unfamiliar lands. . . . . We tear into the great spaces of the future and the turbines fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues. Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes

down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass—pass. . . . . This is the note I have tried to emphasize. . . . . It is a note of crumbling and confusion, of change and seemingly aimless swelling, of a bubbling up and medley of futile loves and sorrows. But through the confusion sounds another note. Through the confusion something drives, something that is at once human achievement and the most inhuman of all existing things. Something comes out of it. . . . . How can I express the values of a thing at once so essential and so immaterial? It is something that calls upon such men as I with an irresistible appeal. I have figured it in my last section by the symbol of my destroyer, stark and swift, irrelevant to most human interests. Sometimes I call this reality Science, sometimes I call it Truth. . . . . I see it always as austerity, as beauty. This thing we make clear is the heart of life. It is the one enduring thing . . . . . but the how and why of it are all beyond the compass of my mind. . . . . Yet the full sense of it was with me all that night as I drove, lonely above the rush and murmur of my engines, out upon the weltering circle of the sea. . . . . Far out to the North East there came the flicker of a squadron of warships waving white swords of light about the sky. . . . . I fell into thought that was nearly formless, into doubts and dreams that have no words, and it seemed good to me to drive ahead and on and on through the windy starlight, over the long black waves."

George is accompanied by four journalists, who later

"served me up to the public in turgid, degenerate Kiplingese . . . . . Though as a matter of fact X2 isn't intended for the Empire, or, indeed, for the hands of any European Power. We offered it to our own people first, but they would have nothing to do with me, and I have long since ceased to trouble much about such questions. I have come to see myself from the outside, my country from the outside—without illusions. We make and pass. We are all things that make and pass, striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea."

Before commenting, perhaps unnecessarily, on this passage, some sentences from Mr. Wells' preface to *William Clissold* may be recalled:

"And one other question may be glanced at here before this note concludes. There is much discussion of opinion in this book. Does that make it anything but a novel? Is it

> not quite as much life to meet and deal with a new idea as to meet and deal with a new lover? Must the characters in our English and American novels be for evermore as cleaned of thought as a rabbit is of its bowels, before they can be served up for consumption?"

Since Mr. Wells invites us then to the banquet of thought, we may accompany humanity in the person of George Ponderevo into the great spaces of the future, to windy freedom and trackless ways. What carries him to this happy destination is a destroyer, used by Mr. Wells (a shorter name than Ponderevo) as a symbol of Science, or Truth, because, as he tells us, it is irrelevant to most human interests. The significance of a destroyer is presumably destruction, which it is surprising to find Mr. Wells considers as irrelevant to human interests. But, apparently, Mr. Wells' prophetic élan would flag without the imaginative stimulus of the killing of men in unfamiliar lands. Or, perhaps, Mr. Wells really means to suggest that Science, or Truth, is destructive to humanity which, if George is to be admitted as an exemplar, is at least an arguable opinion. But no, Mr. Wells sees it as the heart of life, as the one enduring thing. He sees it also as austerity, as beauty, which is surprising too, both in view of the prose wherein he celebrates it and of the final consummation he suggests for it, which is the windy freedom of the unknown. It is a pity, moreover, that, having referred to a Kiplingese surpassing in turgidity and degeneracy his own, Mr. Wells did not invent a sample of it for our astonishment. Finally, to cut a silly business short, it is instructive to observe that Mr. Wells omits from his symbolism the most evident essential, which is the due and necessary return of the destroyer from windy freedom to her moorings in the Thames; though this consideration would interfere, it is true, with the inspired and cloacal imagery of his peroration.

One other quotation—chosen at random, for it is a matter on which he feels keenly and lays frequent emphasis—will fitly conclude this example of Mr. Wells' thought. Mr. Barnstaple, in *Men Like Gods,* is learning the principles of Utopian Society.

> "And that brought him to the fourth Principle of Liberty, which was that Lying is the Blackest Crime. Crystal's definition of Lying was a sweeping one; the inexact statement of facts, even the suppression of a material fact, was Lying. Where there are lies there cannot be freedom. . . . . Lying the Primary Crime! How simple that is! How true and necessary it is! That dogma is the fundamental distinction of the scientific world state from all preceding states".

What then we have to discover is how the author of George Ponderevo's meditations, selected as characteristic of many thousands of pages written by Mr. Wells, of which at once the most accurate and charitable definition is an "inexact statement of facts", can, at the same time, be sincerely persuaded that Lying is the Blackest Crime. Stated in these terms, indeed, so common a phenomenon scarcely demands classification. The principles of religious psychology are always illuminating, however, since they are simple, profound, and universal. To adopt Mr. Wells' formula, one or two of them might run as follows. The first Principle: Since service, not self, is the goal of life, truth is for others' consumption, not one's own; therefore, II: It is at once nobler and more useful to proclaim truth than to observe it; and a third may be added for the benefit of artists: Represent what you would like to see, not what you see. It would be gratuitous to pillory Mr. Wells for adherence to such commonly accepted principles were it not that he flies the flag not of religion, but of science, which deserves a better advertisement. Moreover, he would still prefer, he tells us with some acrimony, that his novels should be considered and judged as the works of an artist; and since the distinction between art and imitation, between the Old and the New man, between Uncle Ponderevo and William Clissold is one of truth, some elementary discussion of the subject is unavoidable.

The pre-eminent aspect of reality for Mr. Wells, as for others, is himself and his own experience; an exact statement of the facts of this reality seems, therefore, of pre-eminent importance if we are to believe Mr. Wells that Lying is the Blackest Crime. And, indeed, Mr. Wells' exact perception of one category of facts

about himself bore appropriate fruit in comic creation, which happened to be his particular method of accepting and assimilating the important piece of reality represented by himself, and thereby reality as a whole. This reality was a comic one, it may be added, because Mr. Wells, observing human life in the person of himself, perceived as its first and essential characteristic the discrepancy between desire and fulfilment, between pretension and performance, between noble ideals and ignoble practice, which it is the function of the comic artist to perceive as essential reality and exploit. Such was, and is, we must believe, the reality as Mr. Wells sees it, since this is the only reality he has communicated to us. Man, however, is created to create himself; and in *Tono Bungay* Mr. Wells began the necessary substitution of the world he would like to see and the Mr. Wells he would like to see for the world and the Mr. Wells he saw. Whatever Mr. Wells now describes, whether it is a woman, a love affair, society, a statesman, himself under many aliases, the world as it is, was, or will be, we are sure of being told, not what Mr. Wells sees, which since he is a man of talent might be of interest to others, but what he would like to see, which is of no interest to anyone but himself. For the world Mr. Wells would like to see and has described for us, in place of the world he sees, in many books, resembles all such worlds in being the image of the sometimes vulgar, sometimes puerile desires and vanities of the average sensual man, more or less envious, more or less callous, and more or less dishonest.

The discrepancy between what Mr. Wells sees and would like to see is most evident, as is to be expected, despite his efforts, when he is describing matters in which his desires are most closely engaged, such as the relations between the sexes, and social life. The snobbery of social reformers is a historical commonplace, but what is amusing in the private life of a revolutionary is inharmonious in a novel; and Mr. Wells' Tennysonian feats in this line can only be equalled by his master, on whom, indeed, he has modelled his style so closely that the two, discounting the exigencies of blank verse, are frequently indistinguishable: "I was there from college, visiting the son—the son a Walter,

too—with others of our set, five others; we were seven at Vivian Place". The resemblance in fact goes farther, and Mr. Wells' scientific religion, besides his social aspirations, is closely paralleled in the poet. "Mechanophilus" ("In the time of the first railways") in style and thought, is a remarkable anticipation of George Ponderevo:

> "Now first we stand and understand, and sunder false from true, and handle boldly with the hand, and see and shape and do. Dash back that ocean with a pier, strow yonder mountain flat, a railway there, a tunnel here . . . . . Far as the Future vaults her skies, from this my vantage ground to those still-working energies I spy nor term nor bound".

Only Lord Tennyson or Mr. Wells could have signed the phrase "and handle boldly with the hand", so obscure in the context. Mr. Wells' treatment of the relations of the sexes, in which also a strong if modernized Tennysonian flavour is discoverable, suffers proportionately with his treatment of society. Mr. Wells, as many men, would like women to be what he calls mates, if not precisely because this would afford a simpler means of gratifying his desires than is available among women possessing the psychological characteristics that distinguish them at present, but, at any rate, because this would be some kind of a solution for the present physical and spiritual complications of sexual love, and in particular a welcome relief from the burden of masculine responsibility. He would also like woman to be gracious, austere, like "a black princess waving a sword", and so on, which is uncommon in reality. Down go Mr. Wells' love scenes accordingly as he would like them to be, and as, one must conclude, he persuades himself they have been in his experience. My dear! is the usual cry of one mate to the other. My dear! signifying a world of gracious and austere implications and urgencies. The disadvantage of premising women to be something they are not, however, is the liability to a righteous indignation when forced to discover what they are; and this Mr. Wells cannot always avoid letting slip into his books, with an effect that is not only artistically but morally distasteful. To mention a recent example, despite Mr. Wells' singular claim to dramatic

irresponsibility for his characters in the preface to *Clissold,* the quality of the writing dealing with the characters of Clissold's wife and mother reveals a vindictiveness and insensibility for which William cannot, unhappily, be held responsible.

Nevertheless, if Mr. Wells' preference for describing what he would like to see is incompatible with the novelist's function of communicating the reality he sees, the artist's loss, it may be argued, is the prophet's gain, whose function is the communication of a reality superior to the actual. What we have not seen, however, we cannot communicate; a vision is something seen, and the prophet differs only from the artist in perceiving another kind of reality. What we would like to see, on the other hand, we dream about; and Mr. Wells has so long been occupied in dreaming of what he would like to see that he has had no time to see either the reality of this world or another. The Utopias of a writer whose fundamental sense of reality is comedic cannot in any case be expected to carry more conviction than any other worlds of wish-fulfilment achieved by the suppression of reality. On this definition, Mr. Wells has for a long time written nothing but Utopias, and his descriptions of the world as it will be do not differ from his descriptions of the world as it is, in his novels, or as it was, in his history, except in so far as he can indulge his personal predilections unhampered by any necessity of relating them to reality. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the world depicted in his Utopias is even less prepossessing than that of his novels, though it must in justice be admitted that Mr. Wells evinces some dissatisfaction with his Utopias himself, and usually provides them with a further outlet among the stars, where it is to be presumed that our desires, if not fulfilled, will assume the graciousness and austerity regrettably denied them in the small breeding-ground of a single planet.

But, indeed, it is evident that to accord Mr. Wells, despite his protestations, the harsh treatment due to a thinker or an artist is to do him an injustice. Many men write nonsense, which many others are glad to read, and nobody is possibly the worse. Moreover, Mr. Wells does not always, even latterly, write nonsense, and as an educational publicist he has no rival. *The Outline of*

History, in spite of obvious and lamentable errors in taste, in accuracy, and in proportion, could have been achieved so successfully for its purpose by no other contemporary. Such gifts, if not of the highest quality, are both rare and useful; and no purpose would be served by depreciating them, had their owner never given evidence of possessing others. But, since Mr. Wells' progression to quasi-religious publicist has been by way of the artist, it seems worth demonstrating from his own works that a page of comedy contains more actual truth than a library of exhortation to that end; and that an exact statement of the facts of experience conveys a more lively notion of dignity and freedom than the most high-minded spate of imaginary Utopias, love affairs, and discussions, bestrewn with the painful adjectives under which Mr. Wells at once conceals and reveals his dissatisfaction with human nature in himself and others.

J. F. Holms.

PARENTAGE

Burnished fear my father is.
Since I cannot kill I hide
At my mother's gentle side,
Crouch in deeps that are not his,
Where her cunning fingers spread
A snare, a haven for my head,
Lair of curled captivity.

Whence I burst from love's embrace
Panic-stricken, panting, free,
So astonished greet her face,
Glimpse the pain between the eyes,
Meet her heart's bewilderment,
And his jealous fear's content
At my storm of infant cries.

IDA GRAVES.

NOTES AND REVIEWS

A REPLY TO *THE CRITERION*

In an editorial note in the June number of *The Criterion,* headed "Neo-Classicism", the writer, criticizing an allusion to this term made by Bertram Higgins in a footnote to his article "Art and Knowledge" (*The Calendar, April, 1927*), assumes that *The Criterion* is one of the reviews which, Mr. Higgins asserts, use neo-classicism as "a repressive instrument of literary criticism". After giving his reasons, however, for this assumption, the writer at once appears to disclaim the connexion, for he says, "The term 'neo-classicism' is not ours, and is not particularly commendable; for all 'neos' indicate some fad or fashion of the moment and it is not our concern to be . . .", etc. Since the writer of another note, *Politique d'Abord,* immediately preceding this but without reference to Mr. Higgins's article, appears inclined to accept the qualification of neo-classicist, it is reasonable to assume that *The Criterion* would be willing to be identified with the review referred to. This editorial indecision may, perhaps, be accounted for by attributing the two notes to different writers: a supposition made plausible by the difference in their tone—the first being impersonal and carefully written, the second, pettish and inconsequent.

It would not be worth while pursuing this subject only to draw attention to an inconsistency or to point at the always ludicrous spectacle of augustness being irritated almost to vulgarity, but when the tentative and apt criticism of neo-classicism made by Mr. Higgins is answered as an unconsidered, semi-political jeer, a word may be said in its defence.

The charge that neo-classicism is being "adapted into a repressive instrument of literary criticism", is not met by the reply that *The Criterion*—as a representative of neo-classicism—has printed the works of Mr. Lawrence "without attempting to repress them". The possibility of a serious paper attempting to repress the work of an author whom it publishes is too childish to consider. But such a drastic manner of using an instrument is not the only one, and Mr. Higgins may be supposed to have en-

visaged a more subtle. For instance, it is possible that such criticism, characterized as it is by Mr. Higgins, could have a repressive influence by an over-insistence or an undue appreciation of the dogmas which support neo-classicism. It is to these tendencies that Mr. Higgins refers when he speaks of the danger of such critics effecting "a foreshortening of the object of thought similar to that which follows the pure æsthete's denial of all definitive cultural values". There is evidence of such a danger even in *The Criterion's* note. When the writer says, "We have always assumed that certain men of genius, such as Mr. D. H. Lawrence, were simply irrepressible and, therefore, not to be repressed", he conveys at least the implication that such geniuses are less repressible than they should be; and it is towards the discrepancy between such practical compromises and the absolutist theories brought forward to support neo-classicism that Mr. Higgins's criticism is directed.

Further, it is clear to an uninitiated reader that, when Mr. Higgins speaks of the "mixed-merits" of neo-classicist criticism, he means "mixed-*merits*", whereas the writer in *The Criterion* appears to take the words—to use the jargon that he introduces and attributes to Mr. Higgins—as a "neo-communistic", disorderly, and impertinent condemnation. Yet most readers of *The Criterion* must have been impressed by its "calm and socialized demeanour in the midst of the revolutionary concepts by which we are surrounded", and, while admitting the merit of such a demeanour, must sometimes have felt that it was a dispassionate, self-assured mask for a puzzled and unhappy face. The stately editorial "We", in many cases so justly inspiring confidence, has sometimes introduced judgments of a less indisputable nature, and Mr. Higgins has reason for his fear that such judgments, acquiring prestige from the same "calm and socialized demeanour", should delude both their writer and reader.

It is, indeed, unfortunate that *The Criterion's* spokesman in defence of neo-classicism should not have illustrated even this "mixed-merit". There is little merit of any kind in his short note, which begins by being irritably patronizing and ends by being old-maidishly maudlin. His last paragraph—a rhetorical appeal for fair play for "those people who find even a little stay and comfort in the word 'classicism' "—is inapposite and sentimental, and that such traits should be possible in the editorial of a paper which identifies itself with neo-classicism is in some sort a justification of Mr. Higgins's implication that neo-classicism does not prove itself a fully adequate basis for a critical structure.

D.M.G.

POETS AND A PONTIFF

In *The Evening Standard* for June 9th we find Mr. Arnold Bennett, worked up into a sort of moral fervour, propounding the solution of some of those delicate problems which centre round the economic justification of the artist in the modern state. He gives us a clear ruling on one essential point:

> "These parasites on society cannot, or apparently will not, understand that the first duty of, for instance, a poet is not to write poetry, but to keep himself in decency, and his wife and children if he has them, to discharge his current obligations, and to provide for old age".

The absurdity underneath this sturdy, common-sense remark, with its "no-sentimental-nonsense" air, would have been exposed if some other kind of creator had been put in place of the poet. Hardly anyone who reads *The Standard* cares if poetry is written or not, but if some other benefactor were introduced they would find their interests involved. Let us say:

> "These parasites on society cannot, or apparently will not, understand that the first duty of an inventor is not to invent, but to keep himself in decency", or
>
> "The first duty of an explorer is not to explore, but to keep up the payments on his life insurance policy".

We can imagine the outcry there would be, of selfishness, cowardice, wasted gifts. Mr. Bennett would be without his American royalties if Columbus had not been the type of man Mr. Bennett's universe would never breed; even perhaps without that many-cylindered car, which he seems to think the ultimate object of desire of every writer, if the inventor of the internal combustion engine had not prized his inventiveness above his respectability. Mr. Bennett reminds us of one of those poor old ladies who have a horror of going on the parish and who subscribe for years to a burial society so that their corpse may have a lovely funeral.

That the moneyless innovator suffers from the humiliations he is forced to undergo is only too obvious, but it is properly a matter of shame only to society. That he may be able to earn his living in some other way is beside the point, for it is absurd that the unique power in him should be in any way frustrated. Like the couple in Augier's notorious play, who, when they have been married a long time, remark that, at last,

Nous pourrons nous donner le luxe d'un garçon,

Mr. Bennett's poet might falter, "I think I may be able to afford to conceive a little poem next year". But the productive facul-

ties, like the reproductive ones, do not wait on the pusillanimity of those who play for safety.

The organization of the rewards of literature by means of the royalty system is good as far as it goes, but it is always inadequate to the special case and we see no signs that the special case will ever cease to be, as it always has been, the only one really worth bothering about. In the royalty system quantity and not quality is the essential factor.

The patronage of large numbers of people is essential if the artist is to gain that "comfortable earned income" which, Mr. Bennett asserts, "should be and is a matter of pride to the artist". But, material satisfaction apart, how can the artist experience so sublime an emotion as pride unless he can trust his patrons' power of discrimination?

Mr. Bennett's attitude to literature, as expressed in the article quoted, is not sensible but extremely gross.

E.R.

SOLITARIA. By V. V. ROZANOV. With an abridged account of the author's Life, by E. Gollerbach, and other biographical material, and matter from "The Apocalypse of Our Times", translated from the Russian by S. S. Koteliansky. Wishart, 12/6.

We are told on the wrapper of this book that Prince Mirsky considered Rozanov "one of the greatest Russians of modern times . . . . . Rozanov is the greatest revelation of the Russian mind yet to be shown to the West".

We become diffident, confronted with these superlatives. And, when we have read E. Gollerbach's long "Critico-Biographical Study", forty-three pages, we are more suspicious still, in spite of the occasionally profound and striking quotations from *Solitaria* and from the same author's *Fallen Leaves*. But there we are, we've got another of these morbidly introspective Russians, morbidly wallowing in adoration of Jesus, then getting up and spitting in His beard, or in His back hair, at least; characters such as Dostoievsky has familiarized us with, and of whom we are tired. Of these self-divided, *gamin*-religious Russians, who are so absorbedly concerned with their own dirty linen and their own piebald souls, we have had a little more than enough. The contradictions in them are not so very mysterious, nor edifying, after all. They have a spurting, *gamin* hatred of civilization, of Europe, of Christianity, of governments, and of everything

else, in their moments of energy; and, in their inevitable relapses into weakness, they make the inevitable recantation, they whine, they humiliate themselves, they seek unspeakable humiliation for themselves, and call it Christlike, and, then, with the left hand commit some dirty little crime or meanness, and call it the mysterious complexity of the human soul. It's all masturbation, half-baked, and one gets tired of it. One gets tired of being told that Dostoievsky's *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor* is the most profound declaration which ever was made about man and life—as far as I'm concerned, in proportion as a man gets more profoundly and personally interested in himself, so does my interest in him wane. The more Dostoievsky gets worked up about the tragic nature of the human soul, the more I lose interest. I have read the *Grand Inquisitor* three times, and never can remember what it's really about. This I make as a confession, not as a vaunt. It always seems to me, as the Germans say, *mehr Schrei wie Wert.*

And in Rozanov one fears one has got a pup out of the Dostoievsky kennel. *Solitaria* is a sort of philosophical work, about a hundred pages, of a kind not uncommon in Russia, consisting in fragmentary jottings of thoughts which occurred to the author, mostly during the years 1910 and 1911, apparently, and scribbled down where they came, in a cab, in the train, in the W.C., on the sole of a bathing slipper. But the thought that came in a cab might just as well have come in the W.C., or "examining my coins", so what's the odds! If Rozanov wanted to give the physical context to the thought, he'd have to create the scene. "In a cab" or "examining my coins" means nothing.

Then we get a whole lot of bits, some of them interesting, some not; many of them to be classified under the heading of: To Jesus or not to Jesus! if we may profanely parody Hamlet's To be or not to be; but it is the Russian's own parody. Then you get a lot of self-conscious personal bits: "The only *masculine* thing about you . . is your trousers", which was said to Rozanov by a girl; though, as it isn't particularly true, there was no point in his repeating it. However, he has that "self-probing" nature we have become acquainted with.—"Teaching is form, and I am formless. In teaching there must be order and a system, and I am systemless and even disorderly. There is duty—and to me any duty at the bottom of my heart always seemed comical, and on any duty, at the bottom of my heart, I always wanted to play a trick [except tragic duty] . . . . ."

Here we have the pup of the Dostoievsky kennel, a so-called nihilist: in reality, a Mary, Mary quite contrary. It is largely tiresome contrariness, even if it is spontaneous and not self-induced.

And, of course, in Mary, Mary quite contrary we have the ever-recurrent whimper: "I want to be good! I *am* good! Oh, I am *so* good, I'm better than anybody! I love Jesus and all the saints, and above all the blessed Virgin! Oh, how I love purity!"—and so forth. Then they give a loud *crepitus ventris,* as a punctuation.

Dostoievsky has accustomed us to it, and we are hard-boiled. Poor Voltaire, if he recanted, only recanted once, when his strength had left him, and he was neither here nor there. But these Russians are forever on their death-beds, and neither here nor there.

Rozanov's talk about "lovely faces and dear souls" of children, and "for two years I have been 'in Easter', in the pealing of bells", truly "arrayed in white raiment", just makes one feel more hard-boiled than ever. It's a cold egg.

Yet, in *Solitaria,* there are occasional profound things. "I am not such a scoundrel yet as to think about morals".—"Try to crucify the Sun, and you will see which is God", and many others. But to me, self-conscious personal revelations, touched with the guttersnipe and the actor, are not very interesting. One has lived too long.

So that I come to the end of Gollerbach's "Critico-Biographical Study" sick of the self-fingering sort of sloppiness, and I have very much the same feeling at the end of *Solitaria,* though occasionally Rozanov hits the nail on the head and makes it jump.

Then came twenty pages extracted from Rozanov's *The Apocalypse of Our Times,* and, at once, the style changes, at once you have a real thing to deal with. The *Apocalypse* must be a far more important book than *Solitaria,* and we wish to heaven we had been given it instead. Now, at last, we see Rozanov as a real thinker, and "the greatest revelation of the Russian mind yet to be shown to the West".

Rozanov had a real man in him, and it is true, what he says of himself, that he did not feel in himself that touch of the criminal which Dostoievsky felt in *himself.* Rozanov was not a criminal. Somewhere he was integral, and brave, and a seer, a true one, not a *gamin.* We see it all in his *Apocalypse.* He is not really a Dostoievskian. That's only his Russianitis.

The book is an attack on Christianity, and, as far as we are given to see, there is no canting nor recanting in it. It is passionate, and suddenly valid. It is not jibbing nor criticism nor pulling to pieces. It is a real passion. Rozanov has more or less recovered the genuine pagan vision, the phallic vision, and with these eyes he looks, in amazement and consternation, on the mess of Christianity.

For the first time, we get what we have got from no Russian, neither Tolstoy nor Dostoievsky, nor any of them, a real, positive view on life. It is as if the pagan Russian had wakened up in Rozanov a kind of Rip Van Winkle, and was just staggering at what he saw. His background is the vast, old pagan background, the phallic. And, in front of this, the tortured complexity of Christian civilization—what else can we call it?—is a kind of phantasmagoria to him.

He is the first Russian, as far as I am concerned, who has ever said anything to me. And his vision is full of passion, vivid, valid. He is the first to see that immortality is in the vividness of life, not in the loss of life. The butterfly becomes a whole revelation to him, and to us.

When Rozanov is wholly awake, and a new man, a risen man, the living and resurrected pagan, then he is a great man and a great seer, and, perhaps as he says himself, the first Russian to emerge. Speaking of Tolstoy and Leontiev and Dostoievsky, Rozanov says: "I speak straight out what they dared not even suspect. I speak because after all I am more of a thinker than they. That is all". . . . "But the problem [in the case of Leontiev and Dostoievsky] is and was about anti-Christianity, about the victory over the very essence of Christianity, over that terrible avitalism. Whereas from him, from the phallus, everything flows".

When Rozanov is in this mood, and in this vision, he is not dual, nor divided against himself. He is one complete thing. His vision and his passion is positive, non-tragical.

Then, again, he starts to Russianize, and he comes in two. When he becomes aware of himself and personal, he is often ridiculous, sometimes pathetic, sometimes a bore, and almost always "dual". Oh, how they love to be dual and divided against themselves, these Dostoievskian Russians! It is as good as a pose; always a Mary, Mary quite contrary business.—"The great horror of the human soul consists in this, that while thinking of the Madonna it at the same time does not cease thinking of Sodom and of its sins; and the still greater horror is that even in the very midst of Sodom it does not forget the Madonna, it yearns for Sodom and the Madonna, and this at one and the same time, without any discord".

The answer to that is that Sodom and Madonna-ism are two halves of the same movement, the mere tick-tack of lust and asceticism, pietism and pornography. If you're not pious, you won't be pornographical, and *vice versa*. If there are no saints, there'll be no sinners. If there were no ascetics, there'd be no lewd people. If you divide the human psyche into two halves, one half will be white, the other black. It's the division itself

which is pernicious. The swing to one extreme causes the swing to the other. The swing towards Immaculate Madonna-ism inevitably causes the swing back to the whore of prostitution, then back again to the Madonna, and so *ad infinitum*. But you can't blame the *soul* for this. All you have to blame is the craven, *crétin* human intelligence, which is always seeking to get away from its own centre.

But Rozanov, when he isn't Russianizing, is the first Russian really to see it, and to recover, if unstably, the old human wholeness.

So that this book is extremely interesting and really important. We get impatient with the Russianizing. And yet, with Gollerbach's Introduction and the letters at the end, we do get to know all we want to know about Rozanov, personally. It is not of vast importance what he was personally. If he behaved perversely, he was never, like Dostoievsky, inwardly perverse, and, when he says he was not "born rightly", he is only yelping like a Dostoievsky pup.

It is the voice of the new man in him, not the Dostoievsky whelp, that means something. And it means a great deal. We shall wait for a full translation of *The Apocalypse of our Times* and of *Oriental Motifs*. Rozanov matters for the future.

D. H. Lawrence.

MESSAGES. By RAMON FERNANDEZ. Translated from the French by Montgomery Belgion. Cape, 9/-.

From a volume so avowedly tentative as this it is difficult to pick out the main ideas. "I beg the reader," M. Fernandez says, "to consider the pages of this volume as the scattered fragments of an interrupted dialogue. I owe to Rivière's contradictions a good share of the ideas which were leading in me, before I knew it, the confused life of instincts". In spite of the author's strenuous endeavour to define and justify them, these ideas have still a share of that confusion. His problems, which are in part those of the age as well, are peculiarly difficult, and few writers have attempted to define them. To define them, however, is necessarily to take up an attitude towards them; and the fault which in part invalidates M. Fernandez's criticisms is that his attitude is full grown, while his definition is still fragmentary. The best part of the book is the first, in which he outlines what he means by philosophic criticism and lays down the method which it should use. As soon as he begins to use it, we see that

it is either insufficient in itself, or insufficient as he employs it. Either his critical method is wrong, or criticism is not his *métier*. Nevertheless, there is so much thought in the volume, it touches so many problems which contemporary criticism seems unwilling to touch, that it should be read.

M. Fernandez begins with a plea for philosophic criticism. The first object of that criticism is the discovery of "the philosophic substructure of a work", which the author defines as *"the body of ideas which, organized by a hypothesis, supplies an explanation of the essential characters of that work by relating them to the problems of general philosophy which may be implied by them"*. This, one presumes, is, in less abstract terms, to discover whether the conception of a work, its original idea and working out, are valid and can stand the test of general experience and thought. So far M. Fernandez's argument should be generally acceptable. He states clearly the limitations of this method. "A philosophic criticism cannot be rigorously positive because it is founded on intuitions which present no other guarantee than their own evidence. As its task consists in translating these intuitions into ideas, it belongs at one and the same time to the æsthetic register—a freely formed and yet necessary intuition—and the philosophic register—an internal cohesion of ideas". The dangers being so clear, "three conditions are required for a philosophic criticism to work well: he who practises it must first have undergone a strong rational preparation so as not to confound genuine intuition with the phantoms of the imagination. There must also be a public, an *élite* capable of understanding, and especially of feeling, what the critic has felt. . . Finally, *the objects of intuitive thought must be very sharply delimited and defined in the language of common experience"*. The first of these qualifications M. Fernandez possesses in an unusual degree; the third is always eluding him. He says: "I like to get hold of thought in its rough state, while it is unwilling, all caught and entangled in the organic trammels which while fettering it also reveal its living necessity. If by filtering a *naïf* work through criticism, I succeed in obtaining a residuum of ideas, I feel I have done more for truth than if I handled these ideas while ignoring, as it were, those realities which test and guarantee them". Everything I have quoted suggests a method extremely strenuous and severe; yet, when the author begins to criticize any writer he likes, he throws all caution away, pays no attention to his "strong rational preparation", never thinks of sharply delimiting and defining "the objects of intuitive thought", and is as subject to "the phantoms of imagination" as any unphilosophical critic would dare to be. He falls on his knees before Conrad. He takes Meredith at his own value, comparing him

favourably with Dostoievsky, as if the two writers were of comparable genius and the worlds they described of equal reality. He quotes with admiration some of Meredith's most canting sayings, such as "The light of every soul burns upward. Of course, most of them are candles in the wind. Let us allow for atmospheric disturbance". He even says that this timid and hypocritical writer "beheaded romanticism". The sudden appearance of the tiresome bogey of "romanticism" in a serious work of criticism, the melodramatic characterization of Meredith's bourgeois activity as a novelist, are bad enough. But there is worse to follow. "It is time", M. Fernandez concludes, "to receive his [Meredith's] message. It is time to become aware of and obedient to it". Here one can only think that M. Fernandez is writing pure nonsense. This, however, is the worst lapse in the volume.

As a critic, then, M. Fernandez fails as soon as he treats the writers of his choice. The writers of his choice, Newman, Meredith, Conrad, have all, moreover, a strain of hypocrisy in them. The question is whether this critical failure is his own fault or that of his method; and the answer must be, I think, that it is both. As far as we have traced it the philosophic method seems to be a useful one, if used in conjunction with others. But M. Fernandez has still a further function to demand of it, and one feels that this function is in his eyes its real justification. "I do not dissimulate", he says, "that in my essays, devoted for the most part to men of letters, I have not had purely literary preoccupations. I set myself roughly the following problem : can the spiritual experience of the nineteenth century—I mean the spontaneous and organic experience, not the elaborated and systematic experience of the pure philosophers —supply or suggest some precise intellectual principles which would make human life work better?" It is in order to discover this that he sets out to find the philosophic substructure of imaginative works, and for this reason that, when he finds one to his liking, such as Meredith's, he is blind to the falsity or the failure of its æsthetic expression. He likes Meredith's "philosophy", an active, positive, optimistic one like his own; and he does not trouble to inquire how sincerely it was held. Meredith's will to believe is as valid for him as Meredith's actual belief would have been, for it is this belief, this particular assertion, that he seeks, and not the truth of its expression; and, finding it superior in positive merits to the beliefs of Ibsen and Dostoievsky, he finds Meredith superior to them as writers, too. Such naïve results cannot be set down merely to a wrong method; they are the fruits of a false conception of art and a false reading of experience. To discover the philosophic substructure of a work

of art is a profitable task for analysis; to extract this then as the justification and essence of the work is a misunderstanding. But to build up a theory of practical ethics on this abstraction is a misunderstanding so gross, a task so unreal, that not even our interest in the author's strenuous argument can keep us from being irritated by its futility. In a short review it is impossible to trace the chain of obvious errors which make up M. Fernandez's philosophy of literature. One can only point to the results when he applies it; to the fact that he has nothing but praise for Newman, Meredith, and Conrad, and chiefly a negative criticism to offer Balzac and Proust.

In spite of the hasty and prematurely intellectualized theory which M. Fernandez applies to literature, however, the book contains some penetrating isolated observations. Though the author's attempt to construct a synthesis and to be "classical" is a complete failure, his analysis is sometimes admirable. His criticism of Proust and of the limitations of impressionism would be first rate, if his theory of criticism were not always in the background to make us question it. In the essay on Balzac he draws an illuminating distinction between the novel and the recital which, if not quite valid as stated, is a starting point for genuine investigation. "The essential difference," he says, "is that the event of the novel *takes place* whereas that of the recital *has taken place*, that the recital is ordered around a past and the novel in a present not verbal but psychological". Further, *"the recital tends to the substitution of an order of conceptual exposition for the order of living production, and of rational proofs for æsthetic proofs"*. This is excellently said, and M. Fernandez's elaboration of the thesis should be studied by every one interested in the development of the novel.

The translation is good on the whole, but towards the end gets involved in awkward and sometimes almost unintelligible turns of expression.

EDWIN MUIR.

THE PEEP SHOW. By WALTER WILKINSON. Bles, 10/6 net.

When I was a budding author, just before the war, I used to hear Ford Hueffer asserting that every man could write *one* novel, and hinting that he ought to be encouraged to do it. The novel, of course, would probably be only a human document. Nevertheless, it would be worth while, since every life is a life.

There was a subtle distinction drawn, in those halcyon days of talk "about" things, between literature and the human docu-

ment. The latter was the real thing, mind you, but it wasn't art. The former was art, you must know, but—but—it wasn't the raw beefsteak of life, it was the dubious steak-and-kidney pie. Now you must choose : the raw beefsteak of life, or the suspicious steak-and-kidney pie of the public restaurant of art.

Perhaps that state of mind and that delicate stomach for art has passed away. To me, literary talk was always like a rattle that literary men spun to draw attention to themselves. But *The Peep Show* reminds me of the old jargon. They would have called it "a charming human document", and have descanted on the naive niceness of the unsophisticated author. It used to seem so delightful, to the latter-day *littérateur,* to discover a book that was not written by a writer. "Oh, he's not a writer, you know ! That's what *makes* it so delightful !"

The Peep Show is a simple and unpretentious account of a young man who made his own puppets and went round for a few weeks in Somerset and Devon, two or three years ago, in the holiday season, giving puppet shows. It wasn't just Punch and Judy, because the showman, though not exactly a high-brow, was neither exactly a low-brow. He believed in the simple life : which means nuts, vegetables, no meat, tents, fresh air, nature, and niceness. Now this puppet showman was *naturally* vegetarian, and *naturally* nice, with the vices *naturally* left out : a nice, modern young fellow, who had enjoyed William Morris' *News from Nowhere* immensely, as a boy. One might say, a grandson of the William Morris stock, but a much plainer, more unpretentious fellow than his cultural forbears. And really "of the people". And really penniless.

But he is not a high-brow : has hardly heard of Dostoievsky, much less read him : and the "Works of William Shakespeare, in one volume", which accompanied the puppet-show for the first week, is just a standing joke to the showman. As if anybody ever *did* read Shakespeare, actually ! That's the farce of it. Bill Shakespeare ! "Where's the works of the immortal William ? —Say, are you sitting on Big Bill in one vol. ?"

The author has very little to do with culture, whether in the big sense or the little ! But he is a simple lifer. And as a simple lifer he sets out, with much trepidation, to make his living by showing his "reformed" puppets : not so brutal, beery, and beefy, as Punch ; more suitable to the young, in every way. Still, they actually *are* charming puppets.

The book is an absolutely simple and unaffected account of the two-months' or six-weeks' tour, from the Cotswolds down through Ilfracombe to Bideford, then back inland, by Taunton and Wells. It was mostly a one-man show : the author trundled his "sticks" before him, on a pair of old bath-chair wheels.

And, curiously, the record of those six weeks makes a book. Call it a human document, call it literature, I don't know the difference. The style is, in a sense, amateur: yet the whole attempt was amateur, that whole Morris aspect of life is amateur. And therefore the style is perfect: even, in the long run, poignant. The very banalities at last have the effect of the *mot juste*. "It is an exquisite pleasure to find oneself so suddenly in the sweet morning air, to tumble out of bed, to clamber over a stone wall and scramble across some rushy dunes down to the untrodden seashore, there to take one's bath in the lively breakers".

That is exactly how the cleverest youth writes, in an essay on the sea-side, at night school. There is an inevitability about its banality, the "exquisite pleasure", the "sweet morning air", to "tumble out of bed"—which in actuality was carefully crawling out of a sleeping sack—; the "clamber over a stone wall", the "scramble across some rushy [*sic*] dunes" to the "untrodden shore", the "bath" in the "lively breakers": it is almost a masterpiece of clichés. It is the way thousands and thousands of the cleverest of the "ordinary" young fellows write, who have had just a touch more than our "ordinary" education, and who have a certain limpidity of character, and not much of the old Adam in them. It is what the "ordinary" young man, who is "really nice", does write. You have to have something vicious in you to be a creative writer. It is the something vicious, old-adamish, incompatible to the "ordinary" world, inside a man, which gives an edge to his awareness, and makes it impossible for him to talk of a "bath" in "lively breakers".

The puppet showman has not got this something vicious, so his perceptions lack fine edge. He can't help being "nice". And niceness is negative only too often. But, still, he is not *too* nice.

So the book is a book. It is not insipid. It is not banal. All takes place in the banal world: nature is banal, all the people are banal, save, perhaps, the very last "nobber": and all the philosophy is banal. And yet it is all *just*. "If I were a philosopher expounding a new theory of living, inventing a new 'ism', I should call myself a holidayist, for it seems to me that the one thing the world needs to put it right is a holiday. There is no doubt whatever about the sort of life nice people want to lead. Whenever they get the chance, what do they do but go away to the country or the seaside, take off their collars and ties and have a good time playing at childish games and contriving to eat some simple [*sic*] food very happily without all the encumbrances of chairs and tables. This world might be quite a nice place if only simple people would be content to be simple and be proud of it; if only they would turn their backs on these pompous politicians and ridiculous Captains of Industry who, when you

come to examine them, turn out to be very stupid, ignorant people, who are simply suffering from an unhappy mania of greediness; who are possessed with perverse and horrible devils which make them stick up smoking factories in glorious Alpine valleys, or spoil some simple country by digging up and exploiting its decently buried mineral resources; or whose moral philosophy is so patently upside down when they attempt to persuade us that quarrelling, and fighting, and wars, or that these ridiculous accumulations of wealth are the most important, instead of the most undesirable things in life. If only simple people would ignore them and behave always in the jolly way they do on a seashore what a nice world we might have to live in.

"Luckily Nature has a way with her, and we may rest assured that this wretched machine age will be over in a few years' time. It has grown up as quickly as a mushroom, and like a mushroom it has no stability. It will die.—"

But this is just "philosophy", and by the way. It is the apotheosis of ordinariness. The narrative part of the book is the succinct revelation of ordinariness, as seen from the puppet showman's point of view. And, owing to the true limpidity and vicelessness of the author, ordinariness becomes almost vivid. The book is a book. It is not something to laugh at. It is so curiously *true*. And it has therefore its own touch of realization of the tragedy of human futility: the futility even of ordinariness. It contains the ordinary man's queer little bitter disappointment in life, because life, the life of people, is more ordinary than even he had imagined. The puppet showman is a bit of a pure idealist, in a fairly ordinary sense. He *really* doesn't want money. He *really* is not greedy. He *really* is shy of trespassing on anybody. He *really* is nice. He starts out by being too nice.

What is his experience? He struggles and labours, and is lucky if he can make five shillings in a day's work. When it rains, when there's no crowd, when it's Sunday, when the police won't allow you to show, when the local authorities won't allow you to pitch the sticks—then there is nothing doing. Result—about fifteen shillings a week earnings. That is all the great and noble public will pay for a puppet show. And you can live on it.

It is enough to embitter any man, to see people gape at a show, then melt away when the hat comes round. Not even a penny that they're not *forced* to pay. Even on their holidays. Yet they give shillings to go to the dirty kinema.

The puppet showman, however, refuses to be embittered. He remembers those who do pay, and pay heartily: sixpence the maximum. People are on the whole "nice" to him. Myself, I should want to spit on such niceness. The showman, however, accepts it. He is cheery by determination. When I was a boy

among the miners, the question that would have been flung at the puppet showman would have been: "Lad, wheer'st keep thy ba's?" For his unfailing forbearance and meekness! It is admirable—but—. Anyhow, what's the good of it? They just trod on him, all the same: all those masses of ordinary people more vulgar than he was; because there is a difference between vulgarity and ordinariness. Vulgarity is low and greedy. The puppet showman is never that. He is at least pure, in the ordinary sense of the word: never greedy nor base.

And if he is not embittered, the puppet showman is bitterly disappointed and chagrined. No, he has to decide that the world is not *altogether* a nice place to show puppets in. People are "nice", but by jove, they are tight. They don't want puppets. They don't want anything but chars-à-bancs and kinemas, girlies and curlies and togs and a drink. Callous, vulgar, less than human the ordinary world looks, full of "nice" people, as one reads this book. And that holiday region of Ilfracombe and Bideford, those country lanes of Devonshire reeling with chars-à-bancs and blurting blind dust and motor-horns, or mud and motor-horns, all August: that is hell! England my England! Who would be a holidayist? Oh, people are "nice"! But you've got to be vulgar, as well as ordinary, if you're going to stand them.

To me, a book like *The Peep Show* reveals England better than twenty novels by clever young ladies and gentlemen. Be absolutely decent in the ordinary sense of the word, be a "holidayist" and a firm believer in niceness; and then set out into the world of all those nice people, putting yourself more or less at their mercy. Put yourself at the mercy of the nice holidaymaking crowd. Then come home, absolutely refusing to have your tail between your legs, but—"singing songs in praise of camping and tramping and the stirring life we jolly showmen lead". Because absolutely nobody has been *really nasty to you.* They've all been quite nice. Oh, quite! Even though you *are* out of pocket on the trip.

All the reader can say, at the end of this songful, cheerful book is: God save me from the nice, ordinary people, and from ever having to make a living out of them. God save me from being "nice".

D. H. Lawrence.

THE COURT MASQUE. By ENID WELSFORD. Cambridge University Press, 25/-.

The works till now published dealing with the masque have

been confined chiefly to the interests of scholars. Miss Welsford's work, without ceasing to be scholarly, is one which the amateur will read with pleasure. It presents a very picturesque panorama of the process by which a rough, licentious ritual developed into an art form of unsurpassed magnificence. Miss Welsford says, "the history of European masques and mumming is bound up chiefly with the history of the agricultural festivals", and she produces a great deal of evidence which it would seem impossible to interpret in any other way. But, as custom dictated the performance of the masques at Christmas and Shrovetide long after the primitive significance of these feasts was forgotten, so the masque, as a form, lost almost all traces of its origin; though the fact that there are no tragic masques, nor masques of frustration, shows that the impulse behind even the elaborated form was always to celebrate, or to induce, fertility and felicity.

With the aid of Miss Welsford's text, her quotations from contemporary sources, and the many charming designs for settings and costumes which are reproduced, it is possible to recreate in the imagination the magnificence of these spectacles. Their magnificence is something of which our democratic period, so parsimonious of display, is absolutely ignorant. The cost of a masque, during the best period, was probably not far off £10,000 of our post-war money (for one night's entertainment), and as the masque degenerated its costliness greatly increased.

That the masques were, often if not always, superb and not merely expensive is borne out by their influence on the imagery of contemporary poets. There is every reason to suppose that Prospero's speech,

> The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,

is not taken from "nature" but from the *décor* of a masque. Miss Welsford gives this subject a very interesting chapter and traces the influence of the *development* of the masque, from the "linear" pageant of Spenser's early years, to the "perspective" stage arrangements of the Jacobean period, reflected in Shakespeare's later work, and, *Comus* apart, in the imagery of *Paradise Lost*. It is as if a contemporary writer should pass from the influence of the earlier films, in which the narrative was projected as a frieze, to that of the three-dimensional form so well exemplified in *Warning Shadows*.

As masque literature is not widely known we may quote a descriptive passage from Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*.

"The Statuas [statues] enter, supposed to be before descend-

ed from Jove's altar, and to have been prepared in the covert with the Cupids, attending their call.

"These Statuas were attired in cases of gold and silver close to their body, faces, hands, and feet; nothing seen but gold and silver, as if they had been solid images of the metal; tresses of hair, as they had been of metal embossed, girdles, and small aprons of oaken leaves, as if they likewise had been carved or moulded out of the metal; at their coming, the music changed from violins to hautboys, cornets, etc., and the air of the music was utterly turned into a soft tune, with drawing notes, excellently expressing their natures, and the measure likewise was fitted unto the same, and the Statuas placed in such several postures, sometimes all together in the centre of the dance, and sometimes in the four utmost angles, as was very graceful, besides the novelty.

"It pleased his Majesty to call for it again at the end, ... but one of the Statuas by that time was undressed".

Such an experience, exquisite as it must have been, is no part of our world, and it would be mere preciousness to call for the statua to be re-dressed. But we may be grateful to Miss Welsford for a book which revives so adequately a grace and splendour we have lost.

THE MARQUIS DE SADE, His Life and Works. By C. R. DAWES. Holden, 21/-.

The British matron will, perhaps, be disappointed by the reticence of the first comprehensive study in English of this notorious bogey. She will be intrigued by the well-founded narrative of an exciting, and in some ways pathetic, life, but for the rest she must get her thrills from the hush that follows such words as *unutterable* and *indescribable*. In a work intended for public consumption, it could hardly be otherwise, but in the use of such words Mr. Dawes does allow convention to get the better of him; for with Sade so many things that were unutterable and indescribable ceased to be so any longer. To write against strong inhibitions is in itself an achievement, and, although the repression caused by his imprisonment undoubtedly helped to elaborate these obscene phantasies, Sade's work is by no means nothing but an example of mere indirect satisfaction like wall-scribbling, or of wish-fulfilment like most of our popular novels and films. The solemn didacticism of his purpose generally militates against his success either as a pornographist or as an artist.

Mr. Dawes's study is divided into three parts. The first and

second are descriptive of Sade's life and works, and the first is good. The second will leave the reader who has no knowledge of Sade's works with a rather inadequate idea of them—not of their obscenity (that was inevitable) but of their philosophic scope. A good many interesting extracts might have been made without offence from *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*. The third part, too, might have been more ambitious. It is useful in its references, but for a guinea one is surely entitled to some good meat of discussion rather than the sparsely covered bones of a bibliography.

The section which deals with the influence of the times on Sade is fresh and helpful. In estimating the effect of Sade's personal experience on his development, Mr. Dawes seems to us to attribute too much to environment and too little to innate characteristics. In conclusion, the opinions of eminent psychologists are quoted in support of the author's view of the wide significance of the *opus sadicum* and of the perversions that have been baptised in Sade's name, whilst emphasizing the fact that Sade's personal conduct, all things considered, was comparatively inoffensive.

Some time ago in this paper (*The Calendar,* February, 1926) we drew attention to the serious implications of Sade's work. And here it is necessary to make a distinction rather more fully than Mr. Dawes does. Sadism as a psychological fact has only an accidental connexion with Sade; it could be studied in all its manifestations if Sade had never written. But Sade's philosophy (if we may give that name to his rather amateurish but brilliant constitution) cannot be studied without reference to Sadism as a term covering the peculiar sensibility of a personality, and Sadism in this sense may overlap, or fall short of, the boundaries of Sadism as defined by psychologists. Really the most astonishing thing about Sade is the integrity with which he suggested a cosmology and devised a sociology and an ethic, based on an unrelenting fidelity to the experience of his own organism, wherever it might lead him. For this reason *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* is the most generally important of Sade's works, and Mr. Dawes says of it :—

> "Truly a terrible book! But, horrible as it is, it could only have been written by a man possessed of considerable knowledge and a fertile mind. Perverse and immoral as many of the ideas are, they are at least consistently worked out, and for their period are decidedly original. It is well written, and is interesting to a student of human nature in the same sense as the study of a virulent poison may be to a physician.
>
> But that is the most that can be said for it".

But this poison cannot be neutralized when it runs through all the veins of the body politic, as experience teaches us, and when it is so definitely a constituent of the psyche, as art and psychology are agreed.

Sade, of course, is an extreme, a polar type and it is not necessary to go to the poles to know that their existence is necessary to our hypothesis of world-structure. Even amid the felicities of Wimbledon Common, the compass points true to Charenton.

Where it would have been so easy to take up an attitude of pious disapproval, it is pleasant to find that Mr. Dawes's judgment, though often frankly adverse, is never priggish.

E.R.

GO SHE MUST. By DAVID GARNETT. Chatto & Windus, 7/-

That Mr. Garnett has written yet another of his little lady-like tales for the adult nursery would not call for much comment were it not that he is becoming "an influence" under which, according to accounts received, a new genre—the modern English short tale—has commenced to blossom. And, certainly, several books have recently been published with a strong family likeness. It is as well to begin with Mr. Garnett.

Mr. Garnett has for subject, once again, an *éducation sentimentale*—this time, of a girl who is the daughter of a country parson, a widower of an eccentricity that develops into madness. The young lady's emotional nature is awakened by spring and the son of the village grocer, a prodigal temporarily returned from Paris where his simple father, supposing him an artist, keeps him expensively. The mistake was pardonable, for the fellow behaves precisely as the readers of *The Constant Nymph* have learnt the artist does behave. However, his function in this story is to be someone after whom the heroine is to run away to Paris, thereby causing the feminine subscribers to circulating libraries delicious anxiety for her chastity. But the painter is not an artist after all, for, although he regards his little sister's cracked boots without wincing or offering to accept a shilling a week less allowance, the anticipated seduction does not occur. So our little girl marries an honest fellow who, duly redeemed and repentant of his life among the artists, goes into business. Now all is well in the bourgeois heaven. The grocer, attempting to make more money for his naughty son by speculative building, becomes bankrupt: the parson, left alone, turns his vicarage into an aviary. Thus are the wicked, who have not the grace to compromise, punished.

Plainly this story is a very unusual instance of very usual experience. It is quite typical of Mr. Garnett to take some very simple perception about human nature, such as the desire of the young to live their own lives and to mate, the cruelty of the aged relying on and sapping the energy of the young, and the cruelty of the young in refusing to support the aged, and to construct about this notion a quite fantastic story. To call Mr. Garnett's themes commonplace is no criticism, for the "commonplace" may be the "universal". But anyhow, its conceptual theme has small relation to the value of the work of art. In the novel, the human instance is the real theme, but it needs very great skill to invent an instance having all the complexity of life that shall yet be expressive of the simple perception, particularly if the narrative is not to be interrupted with the now outmoded explanation of the older novelists. Mr. Garnett's solution is an ingenious variation of the fable. His "characters" are embodiments of a single trait or "humour"; the story round them is a similar simplification, the unreality of which is disguised by the expedient of narrating with very few scenes, and those in very low relief. In maintaining the proper distance between his story and its readers, Mr. Garnett's singularly formal prose is of great help. (This prose must now be called Mr. Garnett's, for, although it is still a patchwork of half-a-dozen other writers' manners, it is plainly so deliberately). Ultimately, judgment of a fable must be a judgment of the moral in the interest of which the fabulous simplification has been undertaken. It is perhaps enough to say that Mr. Garnett's morality is frivolous, sentimental, and effeminate or, to maintain the æsthetic pretence, that his fable is a very inadequate abstract of life.

MR. FORTUNE'S MAGGOT. By SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER. Chatto & Windus, 7/-.

This book is disappointing. From *The Espalier* and *Lolly Willowes* it was plain that Miss Warner had talent, but that she had not yet clarified her attitude. Lolly Willowes was a witch, it will be remembered. In the first half of the book, to call her witch was a shorthand way of indicating that the external life of this ageing spinster did not express the whole of her being. In the second part, however, we were invited to regard the amusing consequences of assuming that there are witches. That is to say, what began as a technical device became in the end the book's *motif.*

A witch is, of course, very useful. She is a means whereby the novelist removes his story into the region of fantasy where a perfectly ordinary character may perform actions as extraordin-

ary as his "internal life". It is true that the use of such a device may indicate the author's failure to invent a story for his characters that shall include the whole of his perception of them, but the *Walpurgis Nacht* scene in *Ulysses* shows Joyce doing the same sort of thing on a heroic scale. But Joyce was faced with the impossibility of heroic action in the modern world, or, at any rate, with the necessity of explaining that action's heroic significance to himself and an audience equally destitute of an absolute point of reference. And that difficulty is accentuated by our modern insistence that the novelist shall not go behind his story. It is a very proper insistence, for there is no doubt that information about the characters that is incorporated in the drama and rendered as part of it, is vastly more credible and effective than information that is offered by the author in his own person—that is, if we regard the illusion, that the action of a novel takes place in the reader's mental present, as essential.

In *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* there is no witch, but the scene is set in the never-never Islands. The effect is the same as if there were a witch—namely that the story is relieved of any necessity to conform to reality as known to the reader. It is plainly imperative to inquire why this freedom from fact is required, whether the writer's conception is one that transcends reality or whether it is so partial that contact with reality would immediately give it the lie. Now Miss Warner's hero is half an imbecile, half a saintly child, the sort of person for whom the modern world has small mercy, however popular the idea of him may be in drawing-rooms. Certainly, contemporary London, for instance, would make a very inapt background against which to display the poor little creature's soul with Miss Warner's lamentable mixture of compassion and vulgar patronage. Unless the circumstances were faked in a way that could not escape detection, he must appear the poor fish he is. Thus the exotic paraphernalia of this book is so much embroidery intended to make acceptable a conception that without it would be rejected for its sentimentality.

It is plain that Miss Warner has sat at the feet of Mr. Garnett, further evidence for which is afforded by the deterioration of her prose. There are curious echoes in this book of Mr. Garnett's versions of the elegance of Moore and the mannered simplicity of T. F. Powys.

THE PASSIONATE CLOWNS. By HOLT MARVELL. Duckworth, 6/-.

Because there is a witch in his story whose function, besides assisting in the facetiousness of some chapters is to cut a house

party off from the world, Mr. Marvell must go in with Mr. Garnett for the present. His manner, however, is quite different. It is dramatic rather than narrative. From the point of view of the present work, the defect of the dramatic as compared with the narrative method is its superior vividness. Thus, one or two scenes come to life in a way that quite destroys the illusion of the others, and books of this kind are convincing only in so far as they are consistent.

However, Mr. Marvell shows signs in those scenes of a rudimentary sense of irony (to be eschewed if he would follow in Mr. Garnett's successful steps). At present, it looks as though he has adopted the expedients of the fabulists through an uncertainty of intention. It is hoped he will realize how little he needs them.

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN. By THOMAS MANN. Secker (2 vols.), 18/-.

This book arrived too late to receive extended notice but readers of *The Calendar* are recommended, without any reservation, to buy it. Though a far better book than *Jew Süss*, it is likely to involve its publisher in most undeserved loss, unless the few, to whom literature is a serious matter and not a decorative pastime, accept their responsibility. It is a novel on the heroic scale, a thing that has ceased to exist in English letters, and is not by any means lazy reading; but it never bores, like most facile work. The translation is good.

A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING

The cessation of a literary review is not an event to ruffle the surface of national life; to expect it to do so, would expose a misunderstanding of values. On the other hand, we shall not be surprised to observe more satisfaction than dismay among our contemporaries since the fact approves them relatively more seaworthy.

We have decided to scuttle the ship, rather than to have the leaks periodically stopped by a generous patron, because the present literary situation requires to be met by a different organization, which we are not now in a position to form. Could such an organization be formed, we should find means to bring it into play. Our conception of the nature of a literary review does not, however, encourage us to expect an immediate metamor-

phosis, for such a combination as we envisage is dependent on the happy meeting of many contingencies.

The most natural step for a review to take, if it wishes to survive, is to adopt a "political" attitude (one, that is, which implies a tendency to judge by expediency) and, though we realize that such an attitude may be almost essential to the achievement of a sound economic status, we cannot consider it as less than an abuse of function. For, in taking such a step, the freedom to exercise an independent judgment on contemporary work will be lost—not in so gross a sense as commercial obligation, but by the more subtle and more obnoxious distortions required for the continued support of one's own platform. One can have little respect for the periodical which flaunts a pretension to philosophic righteousness and yet makes as many blunders with regard to the actual works of poetry or literature before it as the most unenlightened of its Georgian predecessors.

The value of a review must be judged by its attitude to the living literature of the time (which includes such works of the past as can be absorbed by the contemporary sensibility) and there should naturally be some homogeneity of view among the more regular contributors. It remains to be asked, though, whether this homogeneity be vital, or merely the placid acceptance of a body of dogma or of the prejudices of one superior mind (legitimate only to itself) by some unindividualized members of the *intelligentzia*. For the sum or product of any number of mediocrities is never greater than the unit of mediocrity.

Generalities are invidious, and, as there is no review to which we would apply these strictures without qualification, so there is none, including *The Calendar,* which we judge to be wholly free from such censure.

There is sometimes a moment in the creation of a work of art when a new conception interposes itself and makes further revision impossible. A review has quite different functions from a work of art, but the parallel may serve to explain the unwillingness of those most closely associated with *The Calendar* to continue it in its present form. We are not less convinced than before we undertook it that such a periodical is needed, but, as we said, we are now sure that the present form is not the most efficient it might take.

After two and a half years in the underworld of letters, for we can think of no more suitable way of describing the experience, a certain wisdom ought to have been acquired; especially a sense of the futility of speeches and protestations. Here and there, there is some good work being done. Perhaps it is being done in spite of the reviews.